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NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
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NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS

AUTHORITY

NZQf

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
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The New Zealand
Qualifications Framework

New Zealand Government



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
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Contents

Section 1. The New Zealand Qualifications Framework	2
Purpose of the NZQF	2
Principles underpinning New Zealand qualifications listed on the NZQF and the quality assurance system	2
Lifelong learning	3
Relationship between the NZQF and other tertiary education policy	4
Ongoing development of the NZQF	4
Section 2. Qualifications Framework design features	5
NZQF qualification definition	5
Qualification types	5
Level descriptors	5
Section 3. Qualification design features	7
Qualification title, type and level	7
Strategic purpose statement	7
Outcome statements	7
Credit value	8
Subject area classifications	8
Status	8
Review of qualifications	9
Award of the qualification	9
Section 4. Qualification type definitions	10
Certificate level 1	10
Certificate level 2	10
Certificate level 3	11
Certificate level 4	11
Certificate level 5	12
Diploma level 5	12
Certificate level 6	13
Diploma level 6	13
Diploma level 7	14
Bachelor's Degree	14
Graduate Certificate	15
Graduate Diploma	16
Bachelor Honours Degree	16
Postgraduate Certificate	17
Postgraduate Diploma	18
Master's Degree	18
Doctoral Degree	20
Section 5. Quality assurance arrangements	22
Non-University tertiary education organisations	22
Universities	26
Section 6. Appendices	29
Table 1: Summary of qualification definitions – Levels 1-10	29
Table 2: NZQF Level Descriptors	30

Section I. The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

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The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)¹ is established under section 248 of the Education Act 1989. It was first brought in as a single unified framework on 1 July 2010 under the former section 253 (1) (c) of the Act and was fully introduced into the Act in the August 2011 legislative amendment (the new section 248).

Purpose of the NZQF

The NZQF is a framework based on outcomes, described in terms of knowledge, skills and attributes, and their application.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) administers the NZQF, which is the definitive source for accurate information about all quality assured qualifications, covering senior secondary school and tertiary education qualifications, and including all qualifications open to international students. The NZQF provides information about what knowledge and experience holders of qualifications can be expected to have, and about what further education and/or employment opportunities the qualification leads to.

The NZQF is designed to optimise the recognition of educational achievement and its contribution to New Zealand's economic, social and cultural success.

Specifically, the NZQF:

- conveys the skills, knowledge and attributes a graduate has gained through completing a qualification
- requires the development of integrated and coherent qualifications that meet the needs of individuals, groups, industry and the community
- enables and supports the provision of high-quality education pathways
- enhances confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications
- contributes to Māori success in education by recognising and advancing mātauranga Māori
- represents value for money, is sustainable and robust.

Principles underpinning New Zealand qualifications listed on the NZQF and the quality assurance system

New Zealand qualifications are based on need, outcomes, flexibility and collaboration.

This approach is intended to provide a simple structure for qualifications and programmes.

Qualifications are designed to identify the underpinning skills, knowledge and attributes graduates need to perform a range of roles across a broad context.

¹ The NZQF replaced the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications and the qualifications listed on the National Qualifications Framework.

The following principles underpin the design of qualifications:

Needs based

The usefulness, relevance and value of the qualification is based on its relationship to the workforce and skill needs of individuals, groups of learners, employers, industry and communities. Evidence is required to establish and demonstrate these workforce and skill needs.

The qualification explicitly acknowledges the cultural and social aspirations of Māori, Pasifika and/or other identified communities, where appropriate.

Focused on outcomes

Clear specification of outcomes makes the purpose of the qualification transparent, enables comparisons with other qualifications (both nationally and internationally) and increases portability of the qualification internationally.

Clear outcomes make explicit what graduates can “do, be and know” on completion of the qualification. Clear outcomes also indicate pathways to further education, employment and/or a contribution to their community.

Evaluative quality assurance emphasises the achievement of outcomes relevant to the needs and aspirations of significant stakeholders, particularly learners. NZQA uses an evaluative approach in the quality assurance of qualifications and programmes (see Section 5).

Flexibility

Qualifications can be achieved in different settings including the workplace and education institutions.

Having programmes of study and industry training that lead to a qualification allow learners to achieve it in ways most suited to their educational, work or cultural needs and aspirations. This may include credentialing learning obtained formally or informally towards the qualification.

Trust and accountability

Qualifications are developed collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders in an environment of mutual trust and accountability. The relationships between these parties, like those between government agencies and tertiary education organisations, are based on good communication and collaboration. Parties can rely on the integrity of the processes used and the information provided.

Lifelong learning

Qualifications recognise learning gained in many different ways. The learning can happen at any stage of a person's life, in either part-time or full-time study, and in a range of places and ways:

- on-job
- in education institutions
- electronically
- online
- by distance
- a mixture of ways.

The NZQF does not put limitations on how or where people can learn.

Relationship between the NZQF and other tertiary education policy

The NZQF is fundamental to an integrated tertiary education system. Government tertiary funding subsidies and student loans and allowances are only for qualifications that are quality assured and on the NZQF. Student and graduate visas for international students are also only granted on the basis of study towards and achievement of qualifications on the NZQF.

Ongoing development of the NZQF

Since the NZQF was introduced in 1991, it has evolved. It will continue to change to provide an effective and usable qualifications framework.

Qualification type addition or removal

The need for a particular qualification type on the NZQF is periodically reviewed. Potential additions are usually triggered by an external party making a request.

The merits of an additional qualification type are evaluated against the design and principles of the NZQF.

NZQA follows its standard consultation process for all changes to the NZQF.

Any qualification type added to or removed from the NZQF is approved by the NZQA Board.

Changes to qualification type definitions

Qualification type definitions are reviewed periodically to ensure that the definition remains fit for purpose and is clear. If changes are required, NZQA, in consultation with Universities New Zealand, will draft proposed changes, and consult with the wider sector. Once the proposed changes have been finalised, the NZQA Board will approve them. The new definition is then published on the website.

If there has been substantial changes to the definition, there may be transition arrangements put in place for existing qualifications.

This document outlines the general features for designing, developing and listing and maintaining a qualification on the NZQF. Other relevant documents include the:

Guidelines for approval of New Zealand qualifications at levels 1- 6 for listing on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework

NZQF Qualification Listing and Operational Rules 2012

Degrees and Related Qualifications: Guidelines for Programme Approval and Accreditation to Provide Programmes

These documents are available on the NZQA website at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz>.

Section 2. Qualifications Framework design features

NZQF Qualification definition

A qualification recognises the achievement of a set of learning outcomes for a particular purpose through formal certification.

Qualification types

All quality assured qualifications listed on the NZQF fit into a qualification type.

Each qualification type is defined by an agreed set of criteria which includes the level at which the qualification is listed and the number of credits required at each level. The full definitions for qualification types are provided in Section 4 and a summary in Table 1.

NZQF structure – levels and qualification types

LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES
10	Doctoral Degree
9	Master's Degree
8	Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Bachelor Honours Degree
7	Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates
6	Diplomas
5	
4	Certificates
3	
2	
1	

Level descriptors

The NZQF has ten levels. The level descriptors are provided in Table 2 (see the Appendices). Levels are based on complexity, with level one the least complex and level ten the most complex.

The level descriptors are broadly defined in terms of what a graduate is expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning.

Knowledge is what a graduate knows and understands. It is described as a progression from 'basic general knowledge' through to knowledge which is 'factual', 'operational', 'theoretical', 'technical', 'specialised' and 'frontier' knowledge.

Complexity of knowledge is described together with breadth and/or depth in the field of study or work.

SECTION 2: Qualifications Framework design features

Skills are what a graduate can do. The dimension of integration, independence and creativity is important to describing skills progression and reflects the degree of familiarity of the task/problem requiring:

- Predictability or unpredictability
- Analysis and judgement
- Extent to which the processes involved are standardised or require adaptation and innovation.

Skills are described in terms of:

- the type, range and complexity of processes
- the types, range and complexity of problems and solutions.

Application of knowledge and skills is the context in which a graduate applies knowledge and skills. Specifically:

- Application is expressed in terms of self-management and leadership in a profession or responsibility for the performance of others
- The context may range from highly structured to dynamic

The learner is progressively more autonomous and more accountable, more responsible for interacting and collaborating with, managing and leading others, within progressively less transparent, more dynamic contexts.

Section 3. Qualification design features

The following information covers the key features for all qualifications listed on the NZQF:

- qualification title, type and level
- strategic purpose statement
- the outcome statement (graduate profile, education and employment pathways and/or contribution to the community)
- the credit value of the qualification
- the subject area of the qualification
- whether the status of the qualification is current, expiring or discontinued
- qualification review date
- award of the qualification.

Qualification title, type and level

Qualifications listed on the NZQF have a title where the generic stem of the title begins with the qualification type and is completed by a designator, which identifies its main discipline or subject field, and the level. The title may include other qualifiers, such as optional discipline and focus qualifiers.

The use of qualification titles is restricted to approved qualifications developed by qualifications developers who can demonstrate that their development process has involved, and has had the support of, the appropriate nationally recognised bodies related to the subject title and major content of the qualification.

All qualifications on the NZQF are assigned one of the ten levels. The 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.

Strategic purpose statement

A strategic purpose statement identifies why the qualification should be listed on the NZQF.

It clearly states the qualification's use and relevance to learners, industry and the communities. The statement should also acknowledge the cultural and social aspirations of Māori, Pasifika and other communities, where these are reflected in the need for the qualification.

Outcome statements

All qualifications listed on the NZQF contain outcome statements which describe the knowledge, skills and attributes of a graduate. The outcome statement is used by prospective employers and other tertiary education organisations, and for comparing qualifications. Different learners will achieve the outcomes in different ways, so outcome statements indicate the minimum achievement expected from a qualification.

Each outcome statement includes:

- **Graduate profiles** that identify the expected graduate outcomes of a qualification. This comprehensively describes what a person awarded the qualification must be able to collectively do, be and know. In developing graduate profiles, the qualification developer should consider the full range of capabilities and competencies.

SECTION 3: Qualification design features

- **Education pathways** that identify other qualifications that a graduate could enrol into after completing this qualification. Where qualifications are standalone, and do not prepare graduates for further study, the outcome statement should make this clear.
- **Employment pathways** or contributions to the community that identify the areas in which a graduate may be qualified to work, or the contribution they may make to their community.

Credit value

All qualifications on the NZQF have a credit value. The credit value relates to the amount of learning in the qualification.

In determining the amount of learning in a qualification, a qualification developer estimates how long it would typically take a person to achieve the stated outcomes in the context specified and to demonstrate that achievement through assessment. This determines the credit value for a qualification. One credit is equivalent to ten notional learning hours.

Notional learning hours include:

- direct contact time with teachers and trainers ('directed learning')
- time spent in studying, doing assignments, and undertaking practical tasks ('self-directed')
- time spent in assessment.

A typical learner can usually complete 120 credits of learning in a year.

Subject area classifications

All qualifications on the NZQF are assigned a six-digit code from the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) classification system. The NZSCED classifies a qualification into a subject area, which can be used when searching for qualifications in an area of interest.

Information about the NZSCED classification system is available from the Ministry of Education website at www.minedu.govt.nz.

Status

All qualifications listed on the NZQF must display and maintain clear information on the status using the following definitions:

Current

Qualifications that are current are those which are listed on the NZQF and can be offered by tertiary education organisations.

Expiring

Qualifications which are expiring are those which are either being replaced with a new qualification or the decision has been made for them to be closed. This will normally be as a result of a review.

The qualification may continue to be available to existing individuals while they complete their programme, but no new learners would be able to enrol. Current candidates will need to complete the qualification before the expiry date.

Discontinued

Qualifications designated as discontinued will no longer be available or awarded.

Review of qualifications

All qualifications on the NZQF are reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain useful and relevant and continue to meet the needs of the learners, industry and stakeholders for which they were initially developed.

A review provides an opportunity for the qualification developer and relevant stakeholders to reassess the need for the qualification, to determine whether it is still fit-for-purpose.

The review must be completed within a period of no longer than five years after listing the qualification on the NZQF or the previous review. Factors to be considered in determining the review period include the rate of change in the industry and the size of the qualification.

Award of the qualification

All recognised tertiary education organisations and qualification developers have the right to be able to award qualifications on the NZQF. This is enabled through the *NZQF Listing and Operational Rules 2012*.

The qualification document specifies the bodies that will be able to award that qualification. These include:

- owners of approved programmes leading to the qualification
- Industry Training Organisations² that arrange training leading to the qualification in the industry for which it is recognised
- education organisations accredited to deliver a programme leading to the qualification.

The qualification is awarded by the education organisation where the learner achieved the programme of study or industry training leading to the qualification.

The minimum requirements for the formal certification document are available on the NZQA website and set out below:

- qualification title
- NZQF reference number
- date of issue and/or award
- the bodies whose name or logo can appear on the formal certification document.

Record keeping

Education organisations awarding the qualification must keep records of learner progress and programme completion, and the date the qualification was awarded and certificate issued.

A learner can only be awarded an individual qualification once. If additional learning (e.g. strands) relating to the qualification is undertaken it will be recorded on the learner's academic record or record of achievement. The qualification may be re-issued to include achievement of additional learning.

² Section 159 of the Education Act 1989 describes the different types of education institutions in New Zealand's education system.

Section 4. Qualification type definitions

The following definitions of each qualification type apply to all qualifications listed on the NZQF.

In the Appendices Table 1 presents a summary of the definitions and Table 2 presents the levels descriptors for the ten NZQF levels.

Certificate level 1

Purpose

A certificate at level 1 qualifies individuals with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and/or community involvement.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 1 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate basic general and/or foundation knowledge
- apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks
- apply basic solutions to simple problems
- apply literacy and numeracy skills for participation in everyday life
- work in a highly structured context
- demonstrate some responsibility for own learning
- interact with others.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 1 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 1 or above.

Certificate level 2

Purpose

A certificate at level 2 qualifies individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a field(s)/areas of work or study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 2 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study
- apply known solutions to familiar problems
- apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- apply literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- work under general supervision
- demonstrate some responsibility for own learning and performance
- collaborate with others.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 2 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 2 or above.

Certificate level 3

Purpose

A certificate at level 3 qualifies individuals with knowledge and skills for a specific role(s) within fields/areas of work and/or preparation for further study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 3 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study
- select from and apply a range of known solutions to familiar problems
- apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- apply a range of communication skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- apply literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- work under limited supervision
- demonstrate major responsibility for own learning and performance
- adapt own behaviour when interacting with others
- contribute to group performance.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 3 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 3 or above.

Certificate level 4

Purpose

A certificate at level 4 qualifies individuals to work or study in broad or specialised field(s)/ areas.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 4 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study
- select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- apply a range of communication skills relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate the self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance
- demonstrate some responsibility for performance of others.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 4 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 4 or above.

Certificate level 5

Purpose

A certificate at level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 5 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study
- select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts
- demonstrate some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 5 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 5 or above.

Diploma level 5

Purpose

A diploma at level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within a specific field of work or study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 5 diploma is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study
- select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts
- demonstrate some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others.

Credit requirements

This diploma is listed at level 5. It must contain a minimum of 120 credits from level 4 or above including at least 72 credits at level 5 or above.

Certificate level 6

Purpose

A certificate at level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specialised/strategic context.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 6 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth within an aspect(s) of a field of work or study
- analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts
- demonstrate responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 6 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 6 or above.

Diploma level 6

Purpose

A diploma at level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills in specialised/strategic contexts.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 6 diploma is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study
- analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts
- demonstrate responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts.

Credit requirements

This diploma is listed at level 6. It must contain a minimum of 120 credits from level 5 or above including at least 72 credits at level 6 or above.

Diploma level 7

Purpose

A diploma at level 7 qualifies individuals with specialised and technical knowledge and skills within a professional context.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 7 diploma is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more fields of work or study
- analyse and generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems
- select, adapt and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills in a professional context or field of study.

Credit requirements

This diploma is listed at level 7. It must contain a minimum of 120 credits from level 5 or above including at least 72 credits at level 7 or above.

Bachelor's Degree

Purpose

A Bachelor's Degree provides individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject³ (or subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major) as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning.

A Bachelor's Degree involves at least one sequential study programme in which content is progressively developed such that it might form a basis for postgraduate study and/or professional practice.

Bachelor's Degrees are taught mainly by people engaged in research⁴ (see Section 253B of the Education Act 1989).

Entry

A programme of study leading to a Bachelor's Degree builds on prior study, work or experience, and is open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements, normally at level 3 on the NZQF.

³ A major is defined by Universities New Zealand as a substantial component of a degree (usually at least one-third and often consisting of one subject only) selected by the individual, in accordance with the regulations, as the principal area of study for the degree. In addition, a major normally includes outcomes at the highest level of the degree.

⁴ Research is an intellectually controlled investigation that leads to advances in knowledge through the discovery and codification of new information or the development of further understanding about existing information, and practice (Degrees and Related Qualifications Guidelines for Programme Approval and Accreditation to Provide Programmes, 2013 or CUAP Handbook 2014-2015).

Outcomes

A graduate of a Bachelor's Degree is able to:

- demonstrate intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytic rigour
- engage in self-directed learning
- demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject
- demonstrate the skills needed to acquire, understand and assess information from a range of sources
- demonstrate communication and collaborative skills.

Credit requirements

A Bachelor's Degree requires a minimum of 360 credits from levels 5 to 7. Some Bachelor's Degrees, notably in professional fields such as engineering, the health sciences and law, encompass additional credits and may require a longer period of study. For example, an eight-semester (four-year) degree would normally be equivalent to 480 credits.

Of the credits required for a Bachelor Degree, a minimum of 72 credits must be at level 7 or higher. The degree should specify a spread of credit across levels, so that the qualification demonstrates progression, reflects the requirements of the degree definition and achieves the associated learning outcomes in a way that is appropriate to the subject area.

Relationship with other qualifications

A person who holds a Bachelor's Degree might be eligible to enrol in a Postgraduate qualification.

Graduate Certificate

Purpose

A Graduate Certificate is designed primarily as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level.

The Graduate Certificate is typically designed as a bridging qualification to postgraduate study for individuals developing educational, professional or vocational knowledge in a new discipline, profession or subject area and/or as a broadening or deepening of skills or knowledge already gained in an undergraduate qualification.

Entry

Entry is open to degree graduates. However, subject to the regulations of the award, those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind may be granted admission.

Outcomes

In addition to the Bachelor Degree outcomes, a person with a Graduate Certificate is able to demonstrate some outcomes of a Bachelor Degree in a new area of study.

Credit requirements

The Graduate Certificate requires a minimum of 60 credits, with a minimum of 40 at level 7 or above.

Relationship with other qualifications

A Graduate Certificate may provide the basis for postgraduate study.

SECTION 4: Qualification type definitions

Graduate Diploma

Purpose

A Graduate Diploma allows degree graduates to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced undergraduate level.

The Diploma is typically designed as a bridging qualification to postgraduate study as well as broadening knowledge and skills in a familiar subject or discipline, or developing knowledge in a new area.

Entry

Entry is open to degree graduates. However, subject to the regulations of the award, those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind may be granted admission.

Outcomes

In addition to the Bachelor Degree outcomes, a person with a Graduate Diploma is able to demonstrate outcomes of a Bachelor Degree in a new area of study.

Credit requirements

A Graduate Diploma requires a minimum of 120 credits, of which 72 credits must be at level 7 or above.

Relationship with other qualifications

A Graduate Diploma may provide the basis for postgraduate study.

Bachelor Honours Degree

Purpose

A Bachelor Honours Degree recognises distinguished study at level 8. It may either be a degree in itself, or a discrete postgraduate degree following a Bachelor Degree.

The award of honours recognises outstanding achievement, meritorious achievement or a pass; these may be termed first class honours, second class honours: first or second divisions, and third class honours.

Entry

Entry to honours study is normally based on achievement of above average performance in the credits within the Bachelor Degree that are relevant to the proposed honours study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a Bachelor Honours Degree is able to:

- engage in self-directed learning and advanced study
- demonstrate intellectual independence, analytic rigour, and the ability to understand and evaluate new knowledge and ideas
- demonstrate the ability to identify topics for original research, plan and conduct research, analyse results, and communicate the findings to the satisfaction of subject experts.

Credit requirements

A Bachelor Honours Degree may be either a 480-credit degree, or a discrete 120-credit degree following a Bachelor Degree.

The degree has a minimum of 120 credits at level 8, with a research component that represents at least 30 credits at that level.

Relationship with other qualifications

Achieved to an appropriate standard, a Bachelor Honours Degree should prepare graduates for admission to further postgraduate study.

NOTE:

Where the Honours Degree is a 480-credit (or more) programme, it must provide an exit point at the end of the study that meets the requirements for a Bachelor Degree.

Some Bachelor Honours Degrees (for example Bachelor of Laws with Honours), approved prior to 1 January 2006, have a minimum of 60 credits at level 8. These qualifications will be grand-parented under previous rules.

Research in the context of a Bachelor Honours Degree develops an individual's ability to design and undertake a project under supervision, and to report on this in an appropriate way. It sharpens the individual's analytical and communication skills and provides a supported introduction to planning, conducting and reporting on the type of independent research that may be undertaken at higher levels.

Postgraduate Certificate

Purpose

The Postgraduate Certificate is designed to extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills.

The Postgraduate Certificate involves credits from a specified subject and cognate areas. It recognises continuing professional development or academic achievement in advance of a Bachelor degree in the same area as the individual's original degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma.

Entry

Postgraduate Certificates require either a Bachelor Degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma in a cognate subject, or relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience.

Outcomes

A graduate of a Postgraduate Certificate is able to show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice.

Credit requirements

The Postgraduate Certificate requires a minimum of 60 credits at level 8.

Relationship with other qualifications

A Postgraduate Certificate provides the basis for further postgraduate study.

Postgraduate Diploma

Purpose

A Postgraduate Diploma is designed to extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills by building on attainment in the principal subject(s) of the qualifying degree, graduate diploma or graduate certificate. A Postgraduate Diploma prepares an individual for independent research and scholarship in the principal subject of the diploma.

A Postgraduate Diploma may be awarded with distinction.

Entry

An individual for the Postgraduate Diploma in a specified subject or, where appropriate, a related area will normally have completed all requirements of the relevant Bachelor Degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma, or is deemed to have acquired the relevant skills and knowledge through appropriate work or professional experience, at an additional level.

Outcomes

A graduate of a Postgraduate Diploma is able to:

- show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice
- engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving.

Credit requirements

The Postgraduate Diploma requires a minimum of 120 credits from levels 7 and above, with a minimum of 72 credits from level 8.

Relationship with other qualifications

A person who holds a Postgraduate Diploma may be eligible to enrol in a Master's Degree.

Master's Degree

Purpose

A Master's Degree qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research, a pathway for further learning, professional practice and/or scholarship.

Master's Degrees usually build on a Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Diploma, Bachelor Honours Degree or a Postgraduate Diploma. They may also build on extensive professional experience of an appropriate kind.

Their outcomes are demonstrably in advance of undergraduate study, and require individuals to engage in research and/or advanced scholarship.

Master's Degrees are constituted in one discipline or coherent programme of study. They may be undertaken by taught courses or research, or by a combination of both.

Credit requirements

The Master's Degree is at least 240 credits except where:

- it builds on a Bachelor's Degree with Honours or an equivalent qualification, or significant relevant professional experience, in which cases it can be fewer than 240 but no fewer than 120 credits
- it builds on a three-year Bachelor's Degree or an equivalent qualification, in which cases it can be fewer than 240 but no fewer than 180 credits.

The Master's Degree must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 9 with the remainder at level 8.

Entry

Providers of programmes leading to Master's qualifications are responsible for establishing entry requirements. The minimum entry qualification for a Master's Degree is a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent (to a Bachelor's Degree listed at level 7 on the NZQF).

A programme of study leading to the Master's Degree is open to those who have met the entrance requirements, including specified levels of attainment, in the programme admission regulations.

The minimum entry qualification for a Master's Degree of fewer than 240 credits but no fewer than 120 credits is either a Bachelor Honours Degree or a Postgraduate Diploma or an undergraduate degree followed by relevant professional experience.

Admission as an individual to a Master's Degree is based on the evaluation of documentary evidence (including the academic record) of the individual applicant's ability to undertake postgraduate study in a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice.

Structure

Master's Degrees are structured in three principal ways:

- Entry to a Master's Degree by thesis is normally based on a Bachelor Honours Degree or a Postgraduate Diploma in the same field of study. The degree includes 120 credits, of which at least 90 credits (at level 9) consist of a research project presented in the form of a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper or scholarly creative work.
- Entry to a Master's Degree by coursework and thesis is normally based on an undergraduate degree in the same field of study. The degree includes 240 credits, of which at least 90 credits at level 9 are in the form of a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper or scholarly creative work, and of which up to 150 credits are from coursework.
- Entry to a Master's Degree by coursework is normally based on an undergraduate degree achieved at a specified level of attainment. The degree is at least 120 to 240 credits and is achieved through coursework consisting of courses, project work and research in varying combinations. It may build on undergraduate study in the same academic field, or it may build on the more generic graduate attributes of an undergraduate degree in other fields, or in some cases on relevant professional experience. Master's Degrees that build on generic attributes and/or experience (often called 'conversion Master's') are usually in professional fields and are recognised as appropriate professional preparation by the profession or industry concerned.

SECTION 4: Qualification type definitions

Outcomes

A graduate of a Master's Degree is able to:

- show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice
- demonstrate mastery of sophisticated theoretical subject matter
- evaluate critically the findings and discussions in the literature
- research, analyse and argue from evidence
- work independently and apply knowledge to new situations
- engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving.

If a Master's Degree includes a component of supervised research of not fewer than 90 credits at level 9, the graduate is also able to:

- demonstrate a high order of skill in the planning, execution and completion of a piece of original research or creative scholarly work
- apply such skills learned during the study programme to new situations.

The research should be completed to internationally recognised standards and demonstrate that the graduate has a capacity for independent thinking.

Relationship with other qualifications

A person who holds a Master's Degree achieved to an appropriate standard, that includes a research component, may be considered for admission to a programme of advanced study and/or original research leading to a Doctoral Degree.

Doctoral Degree

A Doctoral Degree is a research degree whereby the individual becomes an increasingly independent scholar who makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge.

It is normally the culmination of study which begins at the bachelor level and reaches a stage beyond the masters. For the PhD/DPhil and the named doctorate (e.g. DMus), the development takes place under the guidance of recognised experts in the field of study and under circumstances that allow the individual access to appropriate research resources.

The contribution to knowledge is judged by independent experts applying contemporary international standards of the discipline. The hallmark will be the individual's capacity for substantial independent research or scholarly creative activity as attested by his/her educational institution and/or as demonstrated by submitted work.

The major component of all doctorates is original research. The body of work that leads to the award of a doctorate will be one or more of the following:

- a thesis (the PhD/DPhil)
- creative work in the visual or performing arts (the PhD/DPhil)
- a thesis or equivalent creative work in combination with coursework (the named doctorate)
- a creative work in the visual or performing arts (the named doctorate) with a thesis (the named doctorate)
- published work.

Credit requirements

A Doctoral Degree requires at least 360 credits and is listed at level 10.

The following types of Doctoral Degree are recognised.

Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD/DPhil)

A thesis constitutes the entire body of work on which the award of the qualification will be judged. Coursework may also be prescribed for the individual, but this will only contribute to the preparation for research and acceptance into the doctoral programme. Where appropriate, individuals may present a creative work as part of the thesis requirement.

Doctorate in a specified field or discipline – the named doctorate (e.g. EdD or the DMus)

For a doctorate in a specified field, coursework may contribute to the assessed programme of study, but research or the scholarly creative activity and the associated thesis must occupy at least two full-time academic years and contribute not less than two-thirds of the overall credit for the degree.

The coursework, which is to be at a standard in advance of that expected for a masters paper, must be part of a coherent programme with the research work, and should normally cover no more than one full-time academic year.

An individual for a named doctorate must gain a passing grade in both the coursework and the thesis or its creative work equivalent.

Higher Doctorate (e.g. the DSc or the DLitt)

Higher Doctorates are awarded for independent work of special excellence, as judged by leading international experts, which is completed before a person makes an application to enrol for the degree. Individuals will normally be expected to have completed at least ten years of independent work and to have published extensively.

Publication will normally be in scholarly books and/or in reputable international journals. Individuals in the visual or performing arts will have made equally outstanding contributions in their creative work.

Section 5. Quality assurance arrangements

The New Zealand quality assurance framework is integral to the integrity and maintenance of the NZQF, and the recognition of the qualifications listed on it.

The New Zealand tertiary education sector has implemented an evaluative approach to quality assurance. The approach seeks to support the development and enhancement of a quality culture in tertiary education organisations, and to create an environment in which evidence and accountability are valued and autonomy is earned. There is a strong emphasis on:

- focusing on learner achievement and outcomes for learners
- the use of evidence to improve outcomes for learners, business and communities
- accountability through a tertiary education organisation being able to demonstrate that what it is doing is effective.

A key function of NZQA is to set the overarching statutory rules for the quality assurance of qualifications and the tertiary education organisations that provide them (section 253 of the Education Act 1989). To implement these rules, New Zealand has two quality assurance agencies with responsibilities for separate parts of the tertiary education sector (section 159AD of the Education Act 1989):

- NZQA maintains and quality assures New Zealand's qualifications system for the non-university tertiary education sector.
- Universities New Zealand fulfils this function for the university sector.

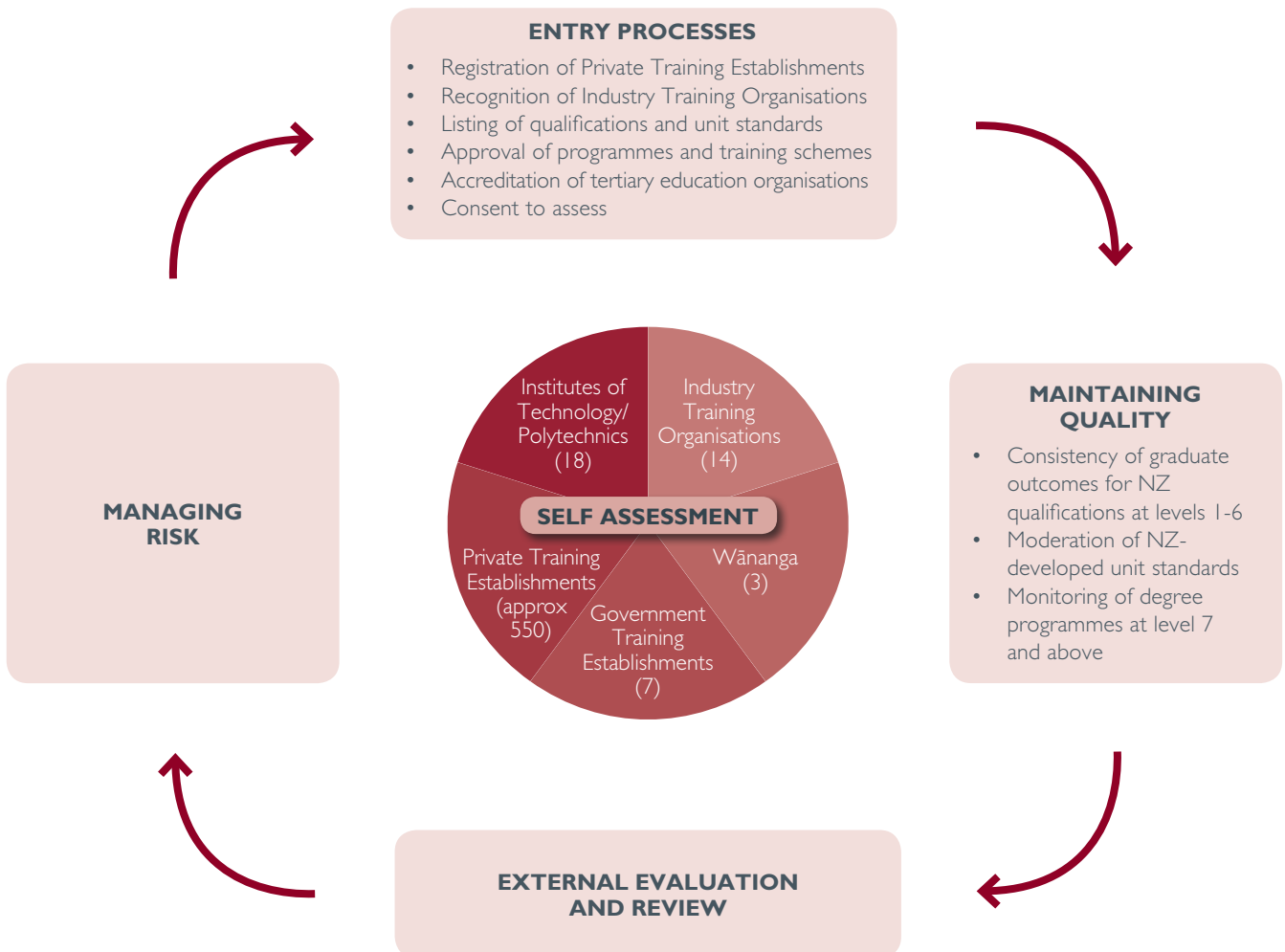
Non-university tertiary education organisations

NZQA is responsible for quality assuring all non-university tertiary education organisations, and approves qualifications developed by these organisations.

An evaluative approach to quality assurance will be used by NZQA to assess applications for approval and listing a qualification on the NZQF. Decisions to approve a qualification for listing on the NZQF confirm that the qualification meets defined criteria.

The evaluative approach provides a transparent and robust process for making these decisions. The evaluative approach seeks answers to high-level questions about the need for the qualification in New Zealand, the design of the qualification and the match to stakeholder needs, the adequacy of the qualification for meeting its strategic purpose, graduate profiles and outcomes, and its readiness for publishing. It guides the evaluation of both the big picture purpose of the qualification and the more specific requirements of the defined criteria.

The quality assurance system for non-university tertiary education organisations



Tertiary education organisations (TEOs) are responsible for using **self-assessment** to maintain and improve their own quality and the outcomes they achieve for their learners and wider stakeholders, especially employers. Self-assessment focuses on identifying, responding to and meeting learner and stakeholder needs, evaluating the effectiveness of organisational processes and practices, and using the understanding gained to make real, worthwhile improvements to outcomes and learner achievement.

NZQA does not prescribe how tertiary organisations do this, as every organisation is different, but has published evaluation indicators as a common guide for TEOs and NZQA to reach consistent evidence-based judgements. TEO self-assessment information provides the evidence base for all the quality assurance processes.

SECTION 5: Quality assurance arrangements

Entry processes

A private training establishment (PTE) must be registered with NZQA if it wants to develop, deliver or use qualifications listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework and standards listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards. The registration process ensures that the PTE meets all legislative requirements for an educational organisation, including NZQA rules. The PTE must have governing members who are suitable for delivering education with adequate staff, and equipment and facilities for the education delivered. Furthermore, the PTE must be financially stable with sound quality management systems and practices.

NZQA also provides advice to Ministers and the Tertiary Education Commission on the **recognition and re-recognition of ITOs**.

To be listed on the NZQF a **New Zealand qualification** at levels 1-6 on the NZQF must have defined outcomes that provide a profile of what graduates can do, be and know. Programmes developed by TEOs lead to the award of these New Zealand certificates or diplomas.

For a **programme⁵ at levels 1-6 on the NZQF to be approved**, it must lead to a listed NZQF qualification and have a structure and components that allow learners to achieve the associated graduate profile. It must also have an appropriate NZQF level, credit value and amount of learning, and be designed to meet the specific identified needs of learners. It must show a progression of knowledge and skills and how the learning outcomes will be assessed.

Degree programmes⁶ (at level 7-10 on the NZQF) are approved if they have appropriate learning outcomes and content, delivery methods, equipment, facilities, staff, regulations, assessment and moderation. Degree programmes must also be taught mainly by staff engaged in research. Degree programme applications are evaluated by a panel with the necessary skills and knowledge who advise the TEO and NZQA about the quality of the application.

Training schemes are smaller than programmes and are approved if they are genuinely needed by learners and stakeholders. Training schemes must have a coherent structure that allows learners to achieve the learning outcomes. They must also have an appropriate NZQF level and incorporate sufficient learning to demonstrate a progression of knowledge.

In order to be **accredited to deliver** a programme or training scheme, the applicant must show that the TEO has adequate staff, equipment and facilities to deliver it as approved. Sometimes NZQA visits the TEO as part of this process.

Consent to assess against assessment standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards is granted when the applicant has support from the standard setting body and meets the requirements associated with the standards. Sometimes the standard setting body visits the TEO as part of this process.

⁵ Programmes delivered by ITPs Wānanga and PTEs or organised by ITOs.

⁶ Delivered by ITPs, Wānanga and PTEs.

Maintaining quality

Consistency Reviews are a recently introduced requirement to assure consistency with outcomes prescribed by the New Zealand Qualifications, Certificates and Diplomas at level 1-6 on the NZQF. All tertiary education organisations awarding NZ qualifications at levels 1-6 must participate. The reviews, facilitated by an independent reviewer, consider the quality of the evidence presented by each TEO to decide if it is sufficient and if national consistency of the qualification can be confirmed. The Consistency Reviews and any follow up are managed by NZQA.

National **external moderation** ensures that organisations using NZQA-managed assessment standards are making assessor judgements consistent with the national standard. NZQA selects standards for moderation based on TEO history, risk, high use and issues that have been identified with the standards. Moderators look at samples of learner work sent in by TEOs and assess if the judgements are consistent with the national standard. NZQA recommends changes to assessment materials or moderation practice when assessor judgements are not verified by NZQA. NZQA follows up with TEOs to make sure they address the issues.

After a degree programme at NZQF level 7 and above is approved, NZQA appoints an **independent monitor** for the degree. The monitor visits the TEO annually to check if the degree is being delivered as approved and reports back to NZQA. NZQA follows up any recommendations from the report with the TEO. After a suitable amount of time, NZQA can give the TEO permission to self-monitor.

External evaluation and review (EER)

EER uses key questions directly addressing achievement, outcomes and key contributing processes to judge the quality of a TEO. It comes to evidence-based conclusions about the quality and performance of the TEO and publishes a public report. When NZQA detects issues, the evaluation finds the source and size of the problem. Immediately prior to an EER, NZQA requires compliance declarations and gathers information on the TEO from other parts of the quality assurance system and from elsewhere. The scope of an EER is designed to cover the strengths and weaknesses of the TEO. NZQA evaluates the TEO's educational performance and capability in self-assessment on-site and reports a level of confidence in each of these aspects. The EER is published on the NZQA website.

The TEO is also placed in one of four categories of capability:

Category 1: Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident or Confident in self-assessment

Category 2: Confident in educational performance and Confident or Highly Confident in self-assessment

Category 3: Not Yet Confident in either educational performance or self-assessment

Category 4: Not Confident in either educational performance or self-assessment

Mātauranga Māori Evaluative Quality Assurance (MM EQA) provides quality assurance for TEOs that deliver qualifications or programmes based on Mātauranga Māori or where the whole organisational approach is based on Mātauranga Māori. MMEQA is integrated into all parts of the quality assurance framework and uses evaluative approaches developed collectively with the sector.

SECTION 5: Quality assurance arrangements

Managing risk

NZQA has rigorous **processes to investigate and manage risk**. NZQA collects information on organisations from NZQA's quality assurance processes (i.e. EER, applications, visits), complaints received and concerns raised by government organisations such as Immigration New Zealand. In its investigations NZQA gathers information on whether there is a risk to students or a breach of NZQA's rules or legislative requirements and takes action, including statutory action to address these. This can include:

- issuing compliance notices to and imposing conditions on organisations
- withdrawing quality assurance status granted by NZQA (i.e. registration, consent to assess, approvals, accreditation)
- legal action for breaches of the Education Act 1989.

Universities

The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (now operating as Universities New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara) is the statutory body with primary responsibility for quality assurance matters in the university sector. It has delegated authority for university programme approval, accreditation, listing of university qualifications on the NZQF, training scheme approval, and ancillary powers under Section 253A of the Act.

Quality assurance in the university sector ensures that academic processes are of an internationally respected standard. The quality assurance processes use evidence to check that goals are being achieved and that policies and practices are under ongoing review as part of an overall quality enhancement system.

There are two bodies overseeing the quality assurance of universities – Universities NZ's Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA).

Relationship with NZQA

Under New Zealand legislation, the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (Universities NZ) exercises the powers of programme approval and accreditation that are held by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority for the rest of the tertiary education sector. Universities NZ has delegated its powers to CUAP.

Representatives of CUAP, AQA and NZQA meet four times each year to discuss matters of mutual interest, and CUAP nominates university representatives to working groups convened by NZQA to consider a range of academic matters when invited to do so.

The Committee on University Academic Programmes

CUAP is responsible for setting up and applying qualification and regulation approval, accreditation and programme moderation procedures across the university system. This includes running programme approval and moderation procedures, advice and comment on academic developments, and encouraging the universities to develop courses of study that will allow the transfer of learners between programmes and institutions.

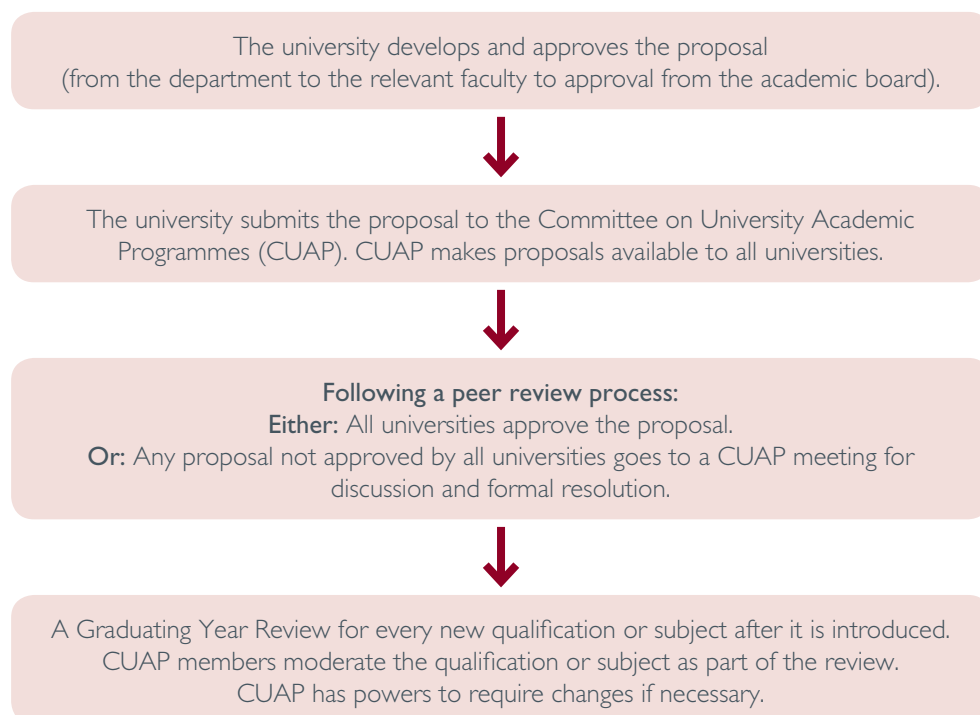
SECTION 5: Quality assurance arrangements

Universities must submit any proposals to offer new qualifications or to make substantial changes to existing qualifications to CUAP. Proposals must meet official criteria which are set by NZQA. These criteria apply to all qualifications offered by tertiary education organisations and are set after consulting with Universities NZ and others in the tertiary sector.

CUAP has a representative from each of the universities, a Chair and Deputy Chair appointed by Universities NZ, and a student representative.

CUAP meets twice a year (usually July and November) to consider proposals made by the universities for new qualifications or major changes to existing ones.

The Committee on University Academic Programmes proposal processes



SECTION 5: Quality assurance arrangements

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand

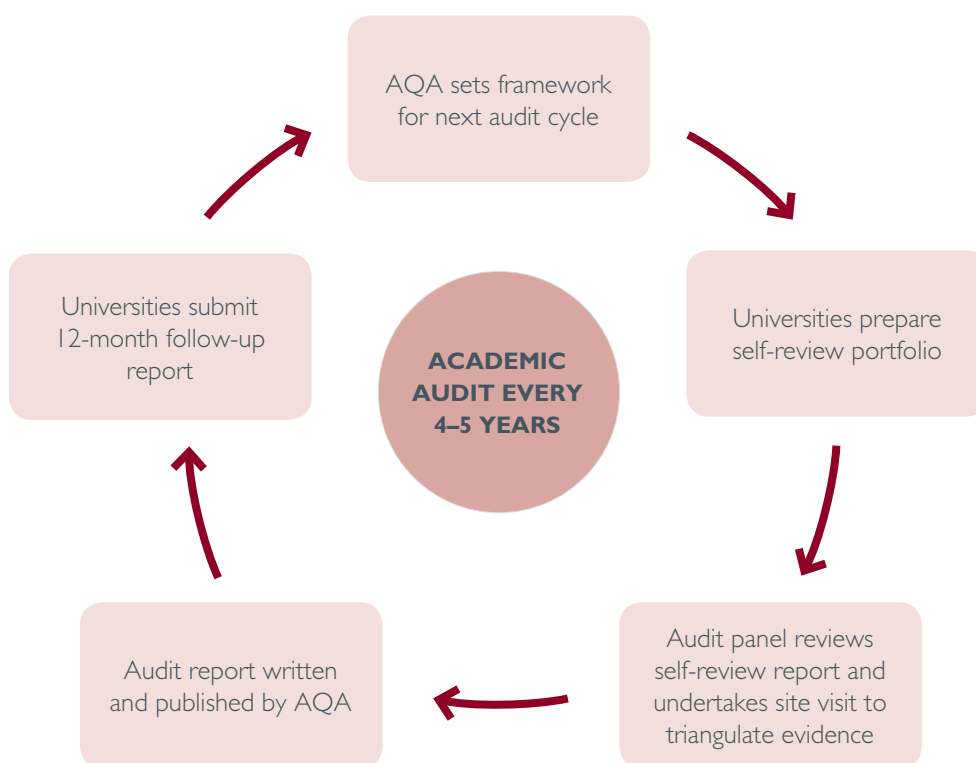
AQA operates independently from the universities and has a governing board of eight people, including academic staff, students, the professions, industry, and quality assurance experts. AQA has an independent external review every five years.

AQA monitors national and international requirements and good practice in higher education quality assurance. It meets the Guidelines for Good Practice of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

AQA supports universities to achieve excellence in research and teaching through a regular audit of the institution and by promoting quality enhancement practices across the sector. AQA analyses trends from audits and consults stakeholders before finalising the focus(es) of the next audit cycle framework.

AQA uses suitably experienced and qualified people to make up audit panels. All audit panels include at least one international member.

The Academic Quality Agency quality assurance cycle



Section 6. Appendices

Table 1: Summary of qualification definitions – levels 1–10

	Certificate 1	Certificate 2	Certificate 3	Certificate 4	Certificate 5	Diploma 5	Certificate 6	Diploma 6
Purpose	To qualify individuals with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and/ or community involvement	To qualify individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a field(s)/areas of work or study	To qualify individuals with knowledge and skills for a specific role(s) within fields/ areas of work and/ or preparation for further study	To qualify individuals to work or study in broad or specialised field(s) / areas	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within a specific field of work or study	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specialised / strategic context	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills in specialised / strategic contexts
Credits	A minimum of 40 credits at level 1 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 2 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 3 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 4 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 5 or above	A minimum of 120 credits from level 4 or above, including at least 72 credits at level 5 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 6 or above	A minimum of 120 credits from level 5 or above, including at least 72 credits at level 6 or above

	Diploma 7	Bachelor's Degree 7	Graduate Certificate 7	Graduate Diploma 7	Bachelor Honours 8	Postgraduate Certificate 8	Postgraduate Diploma 8	Master's Degree 9	Doctoral/ Degree 10
Purpose	To qualify individuals with specialised knowledge and technical skills within a professional context	To provide individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject (or subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major) as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning	To act primarily as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level	To act as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced undergraduate level	To recognise distinguished study at level 8	To extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills on attainment in the principal subject(s) of the qualifying degree	To extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills	To qualify individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research, a pathway for further learning, professional practice and/or scholarship	To become an increasingly independent scholar who makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge
Credits	A minimum of 120 credits from level 5 or above, including at least 72 credits at level 7 or above	A minimum of 360 credits from levels 5 to 7, including at least 72 credits at level 7	A minimum of 60 credits, including at least 40 credits at level 7 or above	A minimum of 120 credits, including at least 72 credits at level 7 or above	A minimum of 120 credits at level 8, with a research component that represents at least 30 credits at that level	A minimum of 60 credits at level 8	A minimum of 120 credits from levels 7 and above, including at least 72 credits at level 8	A Master's Degree by thesis is included 120 credits, of which at least 90 credits (at level 9) consist of a research project. A Master's Degree by coursework and thesis includes 240 credits, of which at least 90 credits at level 9 are in the form of a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper or scholarly creative work, and of which up to 150 credits are from coursework. A Master's Degree by coursework is at least 120 to 240 credits. The Masters Degree must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 9 with the remainder at level 8	At least 360 credits

SECTION 6: Appendices

Table 2: NZQF Level Descriptors

Dimension	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10
Knowledge	Basic general and/or foundation knowledge	Basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study	Some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	Broad operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	Broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study	Specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study	Specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more fields of work or study	Advanced technical and/or theoretical knowledge in a discipline or practice, involving a critical understanding of the underpinning key principles	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge, and a critical awareness of issues in a field of study or practice	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of study or professional practice
Skills	Apply basic solutions to simple problems	Apply known solutions to familiar problems	Select and apply from a range of known solutions to familiar problems	Select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems	Select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems	Analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems	Analyse, generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems	Analyse, generate solutions to complex and sometimes unpredictable problems	Develop and apply new skills and techniques to existing or emerging problems	Critical reflection on existing knowledge or practice and the creation of new knowledge
Application [of knowledge and skills]	Highly structured contexts	General supervision	Limited supervision	Self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance	Complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts	Complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts	Advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills in a professional context or field of study	Developing identification with a profession and/or discipline through application of advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills	Independent application of highly specialised knowledge and skills within a discipline or professional practice	Sustained commitment to the professional integrity and to the development of new ideas or practices at the forefront of discipline or professional practice
	Requiring some responsibility for own learning	Requiring some responsibility for own learning and performance	Requiring major responsibility for own learning and performance	Some responsibility for performance of others	Some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others	Responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts		Some responsibility for integrity of profession or discipline	Some responsibility for leadership within the profession or discipline	
	Interacting with others	Collaborating with others	Adapting own behaviour when interacting with others							
			Contributing to group performance							



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
TETAURA HERETOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

