

# NZQA

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Mana Tohu Matauranga O Aotearoa

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## Quality assurance of education in New Zealand

The primary responsibility for the quality of education delivered rests with the organisation that provides those services. However, quality assurance processes are in place to ensure government and individuals are investing time and money in quality education and training.

Quality assurance focuses on the quality of learning outcomes recognised through qualifications as a whole. It also examines the systems and processes that support delivery of quality by providers.

The [New Zealand Qualifications Framework \(NZQF\)](#) is a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand. This includes [NCEA](#) (National Certificates of Educational Achievement) which are the national qualifications for senior secondary school students.

Quality assurance bodies are responsible for approving qualifications in New Zealand and for the quality that underpins the delivery of those qualifications. The bodies are:

- the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), which approves all qualifications outside of universities. This includes national qualifications delivered by schools, institutes of technology and polytechnics, private training establishments, wānanga and government training establishments, as well as all degrees outside universities
- the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (operating as Universities New Zealand – Te Pokai Tara), which established the [Committee on University Academic Programmes \(CUAP\)](#) to approve university qualifications, and the [Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities](#) to undertake regular institutional audits of the quality that underpins delivery of those qualifications.

Only those tertiary qualifications and providers that are quality assured by a quality assurance body (QAB) can receive government financial assistance. QABs decide if providers and qualification developers meet the required standards.

## Quality Assurance Framework

NZQA has developed an [Evaluative Approach to Quality Assurance - Policy Framework](#). This document outlines the policy requirements for the quality assurance framework applying to private training establishments, institutes of technology and polytechnics, wānanga, government training establishments and industry training organisations. The policies reflect government policy and have been approved by the Board of NZQA.

### Independent evaluation of the Quality Assurance Framework

NZQA's Statement of Intent 2011-2014 committed NZQA to 'an independent evaluation of NZQA's quality assurance framework for the tertiary education sector (non-university), which includes TEO [tertiary education organisation] self-assessment and independent external evaluation and review to determine the effectiveness of the new framework for improving educational outcomes for learners'.

NZQA appointed a panel to conduct the independent evaluation. The members were Dr Ranginui Walker (University of Auckland), Dr Neil Barns (former chief executive of Nelson-Marlborough Institute

of Technology and Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology), Dr Jennifer Green (University of Minnesota) and Dr Ross Finnie (University of Ottawa).

Terms of reference were developed for the independent evaluation (Appendix One of the report). As part of the terms of reference for the evaluation, NZQA provided the panel with seven key evaluation questions to guide and assist the panel's work (page 7). These questions helped to create the scope and nature of the review, and shaped the discussions and report structure.

NZQA also invited submissions from the tertiary education sector, and these submissions were provided to the panel for its consideration (Appendix Two).

The panel conducted a site visit at NZQA's offices during the week of 13-17 August 2012 to hold discussions with appropriate NZQA senior managers and staff. Meetings were also held with senior managers from the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission, and representatives of tertiary education sector organisations (Appendix Four).

The panel's report from the independent evaluation has been received. NZQA will now consider the report and its recommendations and use it to develop a plan to further enhance the quality assurance framework. NZQA is keen to build on the panel's strong endorsement of the framework and its potential.

Read the report: [An Independent Evaluation of NZQA'S Evaluative Quality Assurance Framework \(PDF, 277KB\)](#)

## Evaluative Quality Assurance Framework Project

The evaluative quality assurance framework (EQAF) was introduced by NZQA from 2009.

A key feature of the implementation was the progressive development of an evaluative mindset and capability in evaluation methodology within both tertiary education organisations and NZQA. This is a long-term goal expected to take several years to achieve to a sustainable level.

The EQAF project is considering 11 recommendations that arose from the independent international evaluation of the EQAF and its implementation undertaken in 2012. In addition, with the completion of the first 'full cycle' of external evaluation and review (EER) occurring in June 2013, and September 2013 marking four years of the evaluative approach to quality assurance, NZQA is taking the opportunity to enhance the EQAF.

For example, NZQA is working on new or improved self-assessment resources, a review of mandatory focus areas and a revised policy on TEOs that demonstrate very poor educational performance and capability in self-assessment in successive EERs.

EQAF tools and resources, such as the [tertiary evaluation indicators](#), are being revised and other initiatives, such as thematic reports, are also being considered.

The project comprises five workstreams which consider each recommendation of the independent international evaluation of the EQAF:

NZQA EQAF Work Programme		
Workstream	International Panel Report Recommendations	
Evaluation Leadership and Strategy	5	NZQA develop a succession plan for future development and operation of the EQAF in terms of the related senior leadership
	9	NZQA develop a relationship and communications plan for its work with other Government agencies in

		relation to the EQAF and its results
	11	NZQA develop an ongoing research programme in evaluative quality assurance to increase national levels of expertise, to disseminate lessons learned to international audiences, and to inform future design and implementation improvements
Sector Evaluation Capability	6	NZQA develop a five-year plan and budget to build sector capability in self-assessment
	10	NZQA commission in-depth case studies of good practice examples identified through any part of the self-assessment or EER process that can be shared with the sector
NZQA Evaluation Capability	1	NZQA further develop its tools and processes for identifying and selecting EER panel members and EER lead evaluators and attempt to make sure that each team's expertise corresponds to the specific needs and distinctive contribution of the sector and the institution being evaluated
	2	NZQA review and strengthen the ongoing training provided to EER panel members
Refine EER Business Processes	3	NZQA give consideration to designing an external moderation process appropriate to the different parts of the sector for EER
	4	NZQA give further thought to the appeals process relating to EER outcomes and reports
	7	Lead evaluators continue to provide substantive and constructive feedback to providers at the end of the EER panel visit
	8	NZQA consider a system of two EER reports: 1) A provider report with sufficient detail to be useful to the TEO for quality improvement purposes; 2) A summary form for publication and external purposes

NZQA will provide information to the sector on the EQAF project through updates in the [eQuate](#) newsletter, formal consultation on any proposals for changes to the framework and discussions with its PTE Forum and the ITP Advisory Group.

## Quality assurance processes

Education providers, qualifications and courses are quality assured in the following ways.

### Registration of private training establishments

**Registration** ensures that a private training establishment (PTE) is able to provide a sound and stable learning environment. NZQA is responsible for the registration of PTEs.

Schools, institutes of technology and polytechnics, universities and wānanga do not need to be registered, as they are set up by the Government under legislation.

### Course approval and accreditation

**Course approval** confirms that a course is based on clear and consistent aims, content, outcomes and assessment practices, which meet the necessary criteria and requirements.

**Course accreditation** confirms that a provider is deemed capable of delivering an approved course. A provider may seek accreditation to deliver their own or another organisation's approved course.

All quality assurance bodies in New Zealand use the same criteria for course approval and accreditation. See [New Zealand Gazette](#).

### Moderation

**Moderation** normally involves selection of a sample of assessment materials and learner evidence, to ensure that assessments are fair and valid and assessors are making consistent judgements about student or candidate performance.

### External evaluation and review

**External evaluation and review** is a periodic evaluation of a tertiary education organisation, to provide an independent judgement of their educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

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