

30 July 2025

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request – partial transfer from MBIE

On 1 July 2025 you requested the following information from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) under the Official Information Act 1982:

All advice (including correspondence) and internal and external memoranda (including all discussion documents) concerning the recent addition of India and Sri Lanka to the List of Qualifications Exempt from Assessment (LQEA).

In particular, I am seeking information MBIE holds regarding the increased numbers of applicants they intend to receive from each country as a result of the change, information about why these two countries were not previously on this list and the criteria against which they were added, and information about what specific skills such migrants are expected to bring with them (and whether MBIE has any concerns about the validity of Indian and Sri Lankan qualification providers).

On 7 July 2025, MBIE has partially transferred your request to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for us to respond to the following part of your request:

... information about the criteria used for the inclusion of qualifications from India and Sri Lanka on the updated LQEA.

Role of NZQA

NZQA has been providing advice to MBIE since 2011 to assist with the LQEA. In 2023, MBIE introduced changes to their immigration policy which required the LQEA to be revised to include a comparability of an overseas qualification to a level and qualification type on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credential Framework (NZQCF).

NZQA has further strengthened the qualifications listing criteria, in consultation with MBIE, to provide end users further assurances about the quality of the qualifications on the updated LQEA.

Individuals who have qualifications on the LQEA do not have to apply for an International Qualifications Assessment from NZQA.

Criteria for the updated LQEA

NZQA, in discussion with MBIE, prepared the agreed criteria for overseas qualifications listed on the updated LQEA.

The updated LQEA is a refreshed list of quality assured qualifications that have been approved and accredited in the country of award for reputable and accredited providers. However, this list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all qualifications.

The criteria for qualifications on this list mirror the requirements NZQA considers when evaluating an overseas qualification for recognition in New Zealand. It is important to note that the updated LQEA is designed to provide sufficient assurance to relevant agencies and employers about the validity and quality of the qualification.

The updated LQEA (LQEA 2.0) list of qualifications aligns to the proposed changes to MBIE's visa settings and provides a comparison to a level and qualification type on the NZQCF for specified qualifications.

India

The list includes Bachelor's and Master's degrees awarded in India from the effective date shown on the associated LQEA 2.0 list, from the following approved higher education institutions:

- Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT)
- Indian Institute of Science (IISc)
- Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER)
- National Institutes of Technology (NIT)

Rationale:

- The effective dates for IIT, IISER and NIT are based on when the relevant Acts and Amendments to Acts (India) came into effect. The effective date for IISc is the date it was inaugurated.
- Up to date institutional data informed by India Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education and the University Grants Commission has been sourced for the LQEA 2.0 list.
- International benchmarks have also been used to ensure consistency in how Indian qualifications should be treated.
- State, Central and Deemed universities have been excluded from the LQEA because these institutions offer a range of regular, online and distance education degree programmes. An NZQA check with the University Grants Commission's, Distance Education Bureau (UGC/DEB) is required to determine the mode of study and that the Open and Distance (ODL) education pathway was authorised at the time of enrolment.

Sri Lanka

The list includes Bachelor's Degree, Bachelor (Honours/Special) Degree and Master's Degrees awarded in by Sri Lankan public universities listed from 2015.

Rationale:

- NZQA contacted the University Grants Commission (UGC) Sri Lanka and received confirmation that 17 universities are regulated and quality assured by them. Programmes that these 17 universities offer are, therefore, included in the LQEA 2.0.
- 2015 is the start date as it the year UGC Sri Lanka mandated that all state universities must implement the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) into their degree programmes.
- Up to date institutional data informed by the Sri Lanka Ministry of Education (Higher Education), UGC Sri Lanka and the Quality Assurance Council Sri Lanka has been sourced to inform the list.
- International benchmarks have also been used to inform how Sri Lankan qualifications should be treated.

If you have any questions about the LQEA, criteria, please contact Dolly Seow-Ganesan, Manager, Qualifications Recognition Services at dolly.seow-ganesan@nzqa.govt.nz

Our response to your request may be published on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed before publication.

If you require further assistance or believe we have misinterpreted your request, please contact Elizabeth Templeton in the Office of the Chief Executive, email elizabeth.templeton@nzqa.govt.nz or telephone (04) 463 3339.

You have the right to seek an investigation or review by the Ombudsman of this decision under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982. Details of how to make a complaint can be found at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz. You can also telephone 0800 802 502 or write to the Ombudsman at PO Box 10152, Wellington, 6143.

Nāku nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Klinkum', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Grant Klinkum
Pouwhakahaere/Chief Executive