

Aide-Memoire: NZQA quality assurance of Level 5 and 6 New Zealand Diploma of Business

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
From:	Dr Karen Poutasi, Chief Executive
Date:	24 May 2019
Reference:	CR19109

Purpose

1. This aide memoire outlines the approach that NZQA has taken to quality assuring the New Zealand Diplomas of Business programmes at Levels 5 and 6 on the NZQF. The approach is a consequence of the significant quality concerns identified in the Level 7 Diploma of Business programmes.

Situation

2. NZQA's quality assurance framework focuses on entry into the system, periodic external evaluation and reviews (EERs), programme monitoring (which may include the verification of students' results), and consistency reviews, which assure that all graduates of the qualification achieve the same graduate outcomes to an equivalent nationally acceptable standard. NZQA always follows up when poor educational performance is found.

Monitoring level 7 Diploma programmes led to an expansion of NZQA's programme monitoring functions and increased focus on assessment practice

3. While programme monitoring has been a long-standing requirement for degree and related qualifications, it has only recently been introduced for programmes at NZQF levels 1 – 6 and level 7 diplomas.
4. Rapid increases in the number of international student enrolments between 2012 and 2016 have been associated with a range of quality issues. Much of this growth has been in sub-degree level programmes, including level 7 diplomas, at private training establishments (PTEs). Level 7 diplomas could, under previous immigration settings, offer graduates a pathway to residency.
5. In late 2016, NZQA decided to monitor all level 7 diploma programmes due to concerns about the rapid growth in students studying at this level, coupled with low fees offered by some PTEs. Much of the growth was in international students studying the Level 7 Diploma in Business.
6. NZQA's monitoring identified systemic issues with the programme delivery and assessment practices in the level 7 diplomas. The number and seriousness of the quality issues with

assessment practice suggested they may also exist in other programmes at other levels of the NZQF.

7. NZQA has increased its focus on monitoring the delivery of programmes at levels 1 – 6 to provide assurance they are being delivered as approved and that graduates of qualifications meet the outcomes at an equivalent standard. The monitoring has included a specific focus on the quality of assessment practice.

Quality concerns identified through monitoring programmes leading to Level 5 and 6 New Zealand Diplomas in Business

8. NZQA began monitoring programmes leading to New Zealand Diplomas in Business at levels 5 and 6 of the NZQF in February 2018. A large number of providers (including some with historic quality issues) offered these programmes and there were high numbers of international and domestic student enrolments.
9. The level 5 qualification is attractive to domestic students because it prepares people for operational management roles in New Zealand in a wide range of business-related areas. In some cases, the programme is designed to be studied as the first year of a Bachelor programme.
10. Of the 19 level 5 business programmes monitored, only two met overall approval and accreditation criteria. NZQA identified significant concerns with 13 of the remaining 17 programmes.
11. Similarly, of the 11 level 6 business programmes monitored, none met the overall approval and accreditation criteria. NZQA identified significant concerns with eight of the 11 programmes.
12. NZQA has responded to the quality issues on a case by case basis, depending on the seriousness of the findings and the capability of the provider to take appropriate remedial action. NZQA's actions have included:
 - withdrawal of programme accreditation
 - implementing a detailed remedial plan to ensure that students meet the qualification outcomes and that future delivery is improved
 - implementing programme improvements by agreement without formal NZQA intervention but with active follow up monitoring.

The consistency review of the Level 5 New Zealand Diploma has identified further concerns

13. Consistency reviews provide assurance that all graduates achieve the graduate outcomes of the qualification to an equivalent, nationally acceptable standard. Whereas other quality assurance processes focus on the individual education organisation, consistency reviews focus on all the TEOs delivering the qualification. The outcomes of consistency reviews may inform subsequent reviews of the qualification.
14. Nineteen education organisations participated in the Level 5 New Zealand Diploma in Business consistency review. Of these, only nine provided sufficient evidence to confirm that their graduates had met the graduate outcomes of the qualification to the required standard. This means the outcome of the consistency review for the qualification is that 'National Consistency is Not Confirmed'.
15. This outcome is congruent with the findings from our programme monitoring. It is the first time that a consistency review of a New Zealand qualification at level 1 – 6 has resulted in this outcome. The Level 6 Diploma in Business consistency review is scheduled for August 2019. It is possible that it will result in the same outcome.

Next steps

16. NZQA will now publish the assuring national consistency report for the Level 5 New Zealand Diploma in Business and advise participating tertiary education organisations of their rating. NZQA has actively followed up with those organisations found to be “not sufficient”. Where there is a risk to students or a breach of NZQA’s rules or legislative requirements action will be taken, including statutory action as necessary, to address these.
17. NZQA is the qualification developer of the Level 5 and 6 New Zealand Diplomas of Business¹. As a result of the previously identified concerns, an early review of both qualifications has been initiated. The reviews began in mid-2018 and review panels have met and recommended amendments to the qualifications. Formal consultation with stakeholders will take place between July and August, and the reviews are scheduled to be completed by late 2019.
18. NZQA does not intend to proactively release this briefing as it contains information about quality assurance activities still in progress or being planned.



Karen Poutasi (Dr)
Chief Executive, NZQA
24 May 2019

NOTED

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

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¹ NZQA takes on the role of qualification developer when an ongoing qualifications developer cannot be identified. Usually, this is when there is no national representative body.