

Aide-Memoire: feedback from the second consultation on proposed changes to the NZQF and the next steps

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
From:	Dr Karen Poutasi, Chief Executive
Date:	4 November 2019
Reference:	CR19690

Purpose

1. This paper provides you with a summary of the feedback from the recent consultation on proposed changes to the New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF), and the next steps in the NZQF review.

Situation

2. NZQA released a second consultation paper for feedback in July 2019. The consultation closed on 9 September 2019. The paper sought views on four substantial proposals and some other technical issues: The four substantive proposals were:
 - including a wider range of quality assured education products into a broader qualifications and credentials framework
 - making the NZQF easier to use and more relevant to all stakeholders, including ensuring that the framework better reflects mātauranga Māori
 - ensuring that vocational qualifications can be listed at higher levels on the NZQF
 - embedding transferable competencies into the NZQF.
3. NZQA received 71 written responses (by letter and through the survey). This includes responses from:
 - 45 Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs)
 - four other education bodies - the universities' Academic Quality Agency (AQA) and the Council for University Academic Programmes (CUAP), the Industry Training Federation (ITF) and the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA)
 - three industry bodies - the Electrical Workers Registration Board, the Property Institute of NZ and Engineering New Zealand
 - one school
 - two government agencies
 - 16 individuals.

4. In addition to the responses above, NZQA engaged with the following groups or organisations:
 - Ngā Kaitūhono, NZQA's Te Rautaki Māori advisory group
 - Pacific stakeholders, through a workshop comprising students and educators
 - face to face meetings or other communications with the Office of Disability Issues, Business New Zealand, the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA), the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and one PTE. NZQA also met with three respondents to clarify details in their responses.

Including a wider range of quality assured education products onto a broader qualifications and credentials framework e.g. micro-credentials, standards that are currently listed separately on the Directory of Assessment Standards (DAS), training schemes

5. The majority of respondents supported or somewhat supported the proposal (43 of the 55 respondents), as did those we met with face to face. However, there are clear differences by sector. The university sector had concerns about the inclusion of the DAS in particular. They consider that only composite educational products should be included on the framework (not the elements that contribute to a qualification/credential).
6. NZQA's Board has considered a summary of the feedback to this proposal and it supports the development of a broader New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF). However, the Board acknowledges the universities' concerns and considers that a broader framework should not include the DAS at this point. A broader NZQCF would enable quality assured training schemes and micro-credentials to be listed on the framework. The Ministry of Education is preparing further advice for you on this matter.

Ensuring that the NZQF better reflects mātauranga Māori, including listing all qualifications in English and te reo Māori.

7. The majority of respondents across all sectors and stakeholder groups support both aspects of this proposal. There were a number of useful suggestions and ideas about how NZQA could best ensure that mātauranga Māori is reflected in the framework.

Ensuring that vocational qualifications can be listed at higher levels through a review of the level descriptors and qualification-type descriptors in the NZQF

8. 42 people or organisations directly responded, and others provided their views through face to face meetings. Most respondents across all stakeholder groups support the above approach. Some respondents commented that they supported the intent but that NZQA must take care to do this on the basis of outcomes not just a desire for parity.
9. The industry bodies strongly support the principle of enabling vocational qualifications to be listed at higher levels. They provided examples of where this is working well overseas, and how the relatively low level of vocational qualifications creates issues with workforce supply within New Zealand.

Embedding transferable competencies into the NZQF

10. The majority of respondents support or somewhat support including collaboration, communication and critical thinking in the level descriptors (46 out of the 57 respondents), including the industry bodies. Those that do not support including these competencies are concerned about the reliability of assessment and/or that qualification developers should be able to make decision about which competencies are important for their context.

Other technical issues

11. NZQA's remaining proposals are more technical in nature. We received a range of responses and useful feedback on the options presented.

Next steps

12. NZQA's technical expert group (the Expert Group) met for a week in Wellington between 14 – 18 October 2019. The purpose of the Expert Group was to provide detailed technical advice on the proposed changes to the NZQF, in the context of the feedback received. The Expert Group included two international representatives, to ensure that the NZQF continues to be recognised internationally. This is important for enabling the recognition of New Zealand qualifications overseas and for the international student market within New Zealand. The other members of the Expert Group included nominees or representatives from across the tertiary education sector, including mātauranga Māori expertise.
13. The Expert Group's detailed discussions will help us to take our proposals to the next stage. For example, it identified how vocational contexts could be better reflected within the NZQF level descriptors. The two international representatives provided useful examples of how other jurisdictions are seeking to address similar concerns about parity of esteem issues. The Group also had useful and detailed discussions about how to embed critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills into the level descriptors.
14. We will further consider and synthesise the Expert Group's advice over the next few months. The NZQF Advisory Group is meeting on the 26 November 2019 and we will test our progress with this wider group.
15. Following the meeting with the Advisory Group, we will work on revising the level descriptors. Revising the level descriptors is technically complex work as they must enable NZQA to be able to accurately differentiate qualifications and credentials by level of complexity. They provide 'New Zealand Inc' with the assurance that New Zealand qualifications are consistently categorised, robust and reliable.
16. At this stage, we are planning to issue a revised New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework for consultation by mid-2020. This will incorporate the revised level descriptors, reflect mātauranga Māori and address other identified issues. We will brief you before we consult on the proposed changes. Following what will be the third consultation on the proposed changes, we will undertake the design work of the new framework. We anticipate that NZQF Review will continue on into mid- to late 2020. We will continue to keep you informed of our progress.

Recommendations

17. It is recommended that you:
 - a. **note** the contents of this paper.
 - b. **note** that the Ministry of Education is preparing further advice to you on a broader New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework

- c. **note** that we will shortly be publishing a summary of the consultation response.
- d. **note** we will proactively release this briefing as part of the next publication of documents.



Karen Poutasi (Dr)
Chief Executive
4 November 2019

Noted/Agreed

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

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