

Aide-Memoire: further consultation on proposed changes to the New Zealand Qualifications Framework

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
From:	Dr Daryn Bean, Acting Chief Executive
Date:	9 May 2019
Reference:	CR19017

Purpose

1. This Aide-Memoire updates you on the development of a further consultation paper on proposed changes to the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

Situation

2. NZQA released an initial consultation paper for feedback in October 2018. The consultation closed on 14 December 2018. We provided you with a summary of the feedback in February 2019 ¹.
3. The initial consultation sought views on four high level proposals:
 - i. including a wider range of education products on the NZQF
 - ii. explicitly embedding transferable competencies (critical thinking, communication, collaboration and citizenship)
 - iii. addressing some long-standing technical issues:
 - parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications
 - the purpose of level 7 Diplomas
 - difficulties in referencing level 8 of the NZQF in some other jurisdictions because of the two pathways in the level 8 Bachelor Honours Degrees
 - supporting the development of degree apprenticeships
 - iv. making the NZQF easier to use and more relevant to all stakeholders.
4. This further consultation paper provides more detail on our revised proposals and communicates some preliminary decisions. It has been informed by the feedback from the earlier consultation, our desktop research, more discussion with key stakeholders and the Advisory Group, which met on 2 April 2019. This consultation paper separates the technical

¹ Aide- Memoire: Feedback from consultation on proposed changes to the NZQF and next steps, 19 February 2019, CR18752 refers.

issues into five specific proposals (including a general 'other' technical issues proposal), making eight proposals in total.

Revised proposal 1: including a wider range of education products on the NZQF

5. Including a wider range of quality assured products onto the NZQF would require a significant number of changes to the Education Act and to our own regulatory environment (such as updating our suites of Rules). We now propose to develop a *New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework* instead. This broader framework would incorporate the NZQF, the Directory of Achievement Standards (the DAS) and any other agreed quality assured education products. This would not require legislative changes and would achieve the intent of the original proposal (to provide more information to learners and other stakeholders in one place, enabling clearer pathways and lifelong learning). A draft diagram of what this could look like, using a fan design, is attached in Appendix 1.

Revised proposal 2: explicitly embedding transferable competencies

6. The NZQF describes *Knowledge, Skills and Application* (of skills and knowledge) throughout the ten levels of the framework. It also describes the purpose, outcomes and credit requirements of all the qualification types on the framework (i.e. certificates, diplomas etc).
7. The revised proposal two seeks views on embedding three of the 21st century competencies (communication, collaboration and critical thinking) into the level descriptors, with a focus on levels 1 – 6. We are now proposing to include global citizenship competencies in the description of the qualification outcomes and we are seeking feedback on which qualification types we should embed this competency into (e.g. only certificates at levels 1 – 3 or higher levels qualifications). We are also seeking views on whether cultural competency should be included as a separate competency, and if so whether it should be included in the level descriptors or qualification type descriptors.

Vocational qualifications and parity of esteem issues (now proposal 3)

8. We met with a small group of experienced qualification developers from ITOs to discuss the relatively low level of vocational qualifications on the NZQF and parity of esteem issues:
 - The ITOs would like to see more explicit signalling in the NZQF that vocational qualifications can be at higher levels. This would provide confidence to the sector that any redeveloped or new qualification could be listed at a higher level, if it meets the level and qualification-type requirements.
 - Levels of autonomy and supervision are described in the *Application* domain through the ten levels of the framework. These descriptors may not work well across vocational and academic contexts. For example, a newly qualified electrician can be self-employed and work on their own without supervision or they may be a member of a wider team working on a complex construction site under the supervision of a site manager. Whether or not they are under supervision depends on the worker's context, not the level of their qualification. However, a newly qualified doctor or other similar professional may be required by their professional body to work under supervision for a specified period.
 - Other current policy and funding settings are a significant driver of the relatively low level of qualifications on the NZQF. Funding for arranging training at levels 5 and above is capped at ten per cent of the total value of the Industry Training Fund in the funding mechanism (although in practice only about five per cent of the fund is allocated for this purpose). The funding mechanism also limits funding for New Zealand Apprenticeships to qualifications at levels 3 and 4.

9. We propose to revise the level and qualification type descriptors to ensure that they reflect both vocational and academic contexts. The proposals in the Reform of Vocational Education will impact on the wider policy and funding issues raised by the ITOs.
10. We are also consulting on a suggestion made by BCITO during the consultation process. It suggested describing groups of levels by the purpose of the qualifications at those levels. For example, the NZQF diagram could show levels 1 and 2 as foundational learning and levels 3 – 5 as core and vocational education. This could provide useful information to stakeholders who may be unfamiliar with the levels of the framework and the different types of qualifications.

Other technical issues and making the NZQF more accessible to all users (proposals 4 – 8)

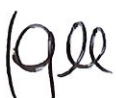
11. There was wide support for reviewing and updating the level descriptors and for using a fan design, such as that used in the Irish Qualifications Framework. There was also support for ensuring that mātauranga Māori is reflected in the framework. These proposals will be progressed in the next phase of the review.
12. We are now of the view that degree apprenticeships are enabled within the current framework and regulatory mechanisms, and we seek feedback on that conclusion. The remainder of the proposals are more technical and detailed in nature. We seek views on options on two of the issues (the level 7 Diplomas and the level 8 Bachelor Honours Degrees). We have worked through these options with sector representatives and other relevant stakeholders.

Next steps

13. Once the Board has considered the direction of travel at its meeting in May, NZQA will consult for a period of six weeks (from mid-June to the end of July). When we have analysed the responses and published the feedback, we will bring together technical experts to review the level and qualification type descriptors. This small group will comprise members with international expertise and sector experts (e.g. experienced qualification developers and kaupapa Māori perspectives). We will consult again on the detail of the final proposed changes at the end of 2019. The design work will take place once all the decisions are made.

Recommendations

14. It is recommended that you:
 - a. **note** the contents of this paper
 - b. **provide** any comments on the direction of travel as set out above
 - c. **note** that we will proactively release this briefing as part of the next publication of documents.



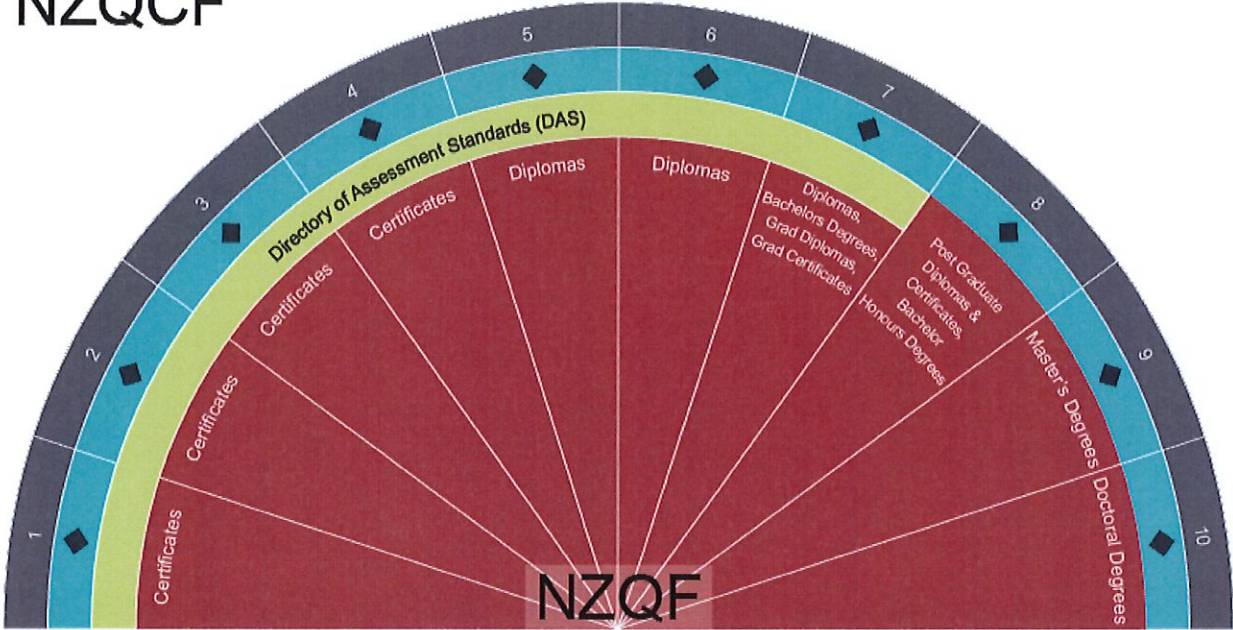
Dr Daryn Bean
Acting Chief Executive
9 May 2019

Noted/Agreed.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education
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Appendix One: How a broader qualifications and credentials framework might look

NZQCF



◆ Other quality assured credentials
e.g. micro credentials and
training schemes