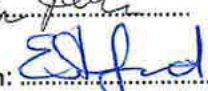




Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Final version for signatures for the purposes of section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020

NZQA Board:  Date: 24 April 2025
Minister of Education:  Date: 14/5/25

Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2025

1. Authority

- 1.1 These Rules are made under section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

2. Commencement

- 2.1 These Rules commence on 1 July 2025.

3. Interpretation

- 3.1 In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires:

accreditation means accreditation to provide an approved micro-credential under section 446A of the Act

Act means the Education and Training Act 2020

approval means approval of the content of a micro-credential under section 445 of the Act

consent and moderation requirements means the standard-setting body requirements listed for standards that relate to the particular skills and knowledge of teachers and assessors, any special resources required for assessing against the standards, learner access to resources, practical experience, and national external moderation

credit recognition and transfer means, in relation to a particular micro-credential, a formal process whereby credit for outcomes already achieved by a student is recognised as credit for comparable outcomes in that particular micro-credential

credit value means the number of credits, with each credit representing 10 notional learning hours

Directory means the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards provided for in section 437 of the Act

external evaluation and review, or **EER**, means the quality assurance system known as EER that is set out in quality assurance rules from time to time made under section 452 of the Act

institution has the same meaning as in section 10(5) of the Act

level means any of levels 1 to 10 on the NZQCF

level descriptors means the descriptors for each level of the Qualifications and Credentials Framework as set out in the Level Descriptors Table published on NZQA's website

micro-credential has the same meaning as in section 10(1) of the Act

NZQCF means the Qualifications and Credentials Framework described in section 436 of the Act

qualification means a qualification listed on the NZQCF

recognition of prior learning means a process that involves formal assessment of a student's relevant and current knowledge and skills (*gained through prior learning*) to determine achievement of learning outcomes of a micro-credential for the purpose of awarding credit towards that micro-credential; and to avoid doubt it does not include credit recognition and transfer

skill standard has the same meaning as in section 10(1) of the Act

standard-setting body means an approved standard-setting body as described in section 438(1) of the Act

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance means applying Te Hono o Te Kahurangi whare ako framework and quality assurance tools for micro-credential approval and accreditation, as that framework and those tools are published by NZQA from time to time on its website

Universities New Zealand means the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee continued by section 311 of the Act

WDC means a workforce development council as defined in section 10(1) of the Act.

Part 1

Micro-credential content approval criteria and applications

4. Criteria for approval of the content of micro-credentials for institutions under section 445 of the Act

4.1 The following are the criteria for approval of the content of micro-credentials for institutions:

Criterion 1 Title and learning outcomes

The micro-credential has an appropriate title and appropriate learning outcomes.

Where standards are specified in the micro-credential listing details, they are included in the micro-credential.

Criterion 2 Need and acceptability

There is evidence of the need for the micro-credential. It is supported by stakeholders and, where appropriate, the relevant WDC.

Criterion 3 Requirements

Requirements for admission, credit recognition and transfer, recognition of prior learning, length and structure, assessment methods, and completion are clearly set out.

Criterion 4 Review

There is an effective process for regular review of the micro-credential that assesses its

currency and content and updates it accordingly.

5. Applications for approval of micro-credentials

- 5.1. Applications by institutions for approval of micro-credentials must contain information that demonstrates the micro-credential meets the criteria specified in rule 4.1.
- 5.2. Applications by universities for micro-credential approval must be made to Universities New Zealand.

Part 2

Accreditation criteria and applications

6. Criteria for accreditation of institutions to provide approved micro-credentials under section 446A of the Act

- 6.1 The following are the criteria for accreditation of institutions to provide approved micro-credentials:

Criterion 1 Delivery

The delivery approach is adequate and appropriate given the stated learning outcomes for the micro-credential and the needs of intended learners. Delivery is appropriate for the delivery modes, and for the location or situation of the intended learners.

Criterion 2 Assessment and moderation

The institution has the capability and capacity to ensure assessment materials and decisions are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate for the level, given the stated learning outcomes.

There is an effective system for moderation of assessment materials and decisions.

Criterion 3 Resources

The institution has the capability and capacity to deliver the micro-credential, including suitably qualified or experienced staff, facilities, educational and physical resources, and student support services.

Criterion 4 Review

There must be adequate and effective review of the delivery of the micro-credential (*including outcomes for students*) and the institution's capability to provide the micro-credential.

7. Applications for accreditation to provide approved micro-credentials

- 7.1 Applications by institutions for accreditation to provide approved micro-credentials must contain information that demonstrates the institution meets the criteria specified in rule 6.1.
- 7.2 Where the micro-credential for which accreditation is sought includes assessment of standards listed on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards, and the applicant is not the holder of a consent to assess against those standards under section 449 of the Act, the applicant must also provide evidence of the applicant's ability to meet the consent and moderation requirements for those standards.
- 7.3 Applications by universities for accreditation to provide an approved micro-credential must be made to Universities New Zealand.



Part 3

Granting of micro-credential approval and accreditation

8. **Granting of micro-credential approval and granting of accreditation to institutions (*other than universities*)**
 - 8.1 NZQA will advise applicant institutions (*other than universities*) if any of the details in the application require further work.
 - 8.2 NZQA may carry out a site visit for accreditation applications.
 - 8.3 Where NZQA is satisfied with the details in the relevant application, NZQA will grant, and advise the applicant institution of, either or both of micro-credential approval and accreditation to provide the approved micro-credential.
 - 8.4 Where NZQA is not satisfied with the details in the application, NZQA will not approve the application, and will advise the applicant.
 - 8.5 NZQA will publish on its website up to date and appropriate details of approved micro-credentials (*from the criteria in rule 4.1*) and details of institutions accredited to provide approved micro-credentials.
9. **Granting of micro-credential approval and granting of accreditation to universities**
 - 9.1 Where satisfied with the content of an application, Universities New Zealand will, under section 453 of the Act and in accordance with any procedures set up for inter- university course approval and moderation under section 312(a) of the Act, grant the relevant:
 - (a) micro-credential approval:
 - (b) accreditation.

Part 4

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance

10. **Requests for Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance**
 - 10.1 When applying for micro-credential approval or accreditation, an applicant may request that Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance is used for assessment of the application.
 - 10.2 An applicant making a request under rule 10.1, in addition to providing the relevant information required under Rules 4 to 7, must provide the information that the Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance framework and tools require.
 - 10.3 NZQA will evaluate a request made under rule 10.1, together with the information supplied, in accordance with Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance.

Part 5

Maintaining micro-credential approval and accreditation

11. **Requirements to be met to maintain micro-credential approval**
 - 11.1 To continue to maintain a micro-credential approval, institutions must ensure the criteria specified in rule 4.1 continue to be met:
12. **Requirements to be met to maintain accreditation**
 - 12.1 To continue to maintain accreditation to provide an approved micro-credential, institutions (*other than universities*) must:
 - (a) ensure the criteria specified in rule 6.1 continue to be met:

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- (b) ensure regular reviews of the provision of the micro-credential are undertaken:
 - (c) participate and cooperate in external evaluation and review:
 - (d) where requested by NZQA, participate and co-operate in micro-credential monitoring, which may include visits to the institution.
- 12.2 To continue to maintain accreditation to provide a micro-credential, universities must:
- (a) ensure the criteria specified within rule 6.1 continue to be met:
 - (b) ensure regular reviews of the provision of the micro-credential are undertaken.
- 12.3 Where the micro-credential to which the accreditation relates contains standards, institutions must continue to comply with rules made under section 452(1)(c) for the purposes of maintaining the consent to assess for those standards.

Part 6

Changes to approved micro-credentials and accreditation

- 13. Changes to approved micro-credentials and accreditation**
- 13.1 NZQA consent is required for changes to the following elements of approved micro-credentials:
- (a) title, learning outcomes approved, or standards included under Criterion 1 of rule 4.1:
 - (b) requirements for admission, length and structure, assessment methods, or completion approved under Criterion 3 of rule 4.1.
- 13.2 NZQA consent is required for changes to the following elements of accreditation to provide micro-credentials:
- (a) the delivery approach approved under Criterion 1 of rule 6.1:
 - (b) assessment or moderation under Criterion 2 of rule 6.1.
- 13.3 NZQA may require holders of approved micro-credentials or micro-credential accreditation to submit changes to their approval or accreditation to NZQA for consent, where there have been changes of significance to the listing details of the micro-credential.
- 13.4 In rules 13.1 – 13.3 the references to NZQA are to be read as references to Universities New Zealand in relation to university micro-credential approvals and accreditations.

Part 7

Miscellaneous requirements

- 14. Use of sub-contractors by institutions (*other than universities*) to provide approved micro-credentials**
- 14.1 Where an institution (*other than a university*) proposes to use a sub-contractor to provide an approved micro-credential or part of an approved micro-credential on the institution's behalf, and the institution and the sub-contractor are both accredited to provide the micro-credential (*or part*), the institution must notify NZQA of the sub-contracting arrangement prior to the micro-credential (*or part*) being provided, and supply the following information with that notification:
- (a) a copy of the sub-contracting agreement which must outline the responsibilities and obligations of the parties:
 - (b) the duration of the arrangement:
 - (c) the reasons for the arrangement:
 - (d) confirmation that any advertising and other information provided to prospective students clearly shows that the study or training involved is provided under a sub-

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contracting arrangement.

- 14.2 Where an institution (*other than a university*) proposes to use a sub-contractor to provide an approved micro-credential or part of an approved micro-credential that the institution is accredited to provide, and the sub-contractor does not itself hold accreditation, the institution must apply to NZQA for approval to engage the sub-contractor prior to any provision of the micro-credential (*or part*) by the sub-contractor.
- 14.3 Applications under rule 14.2 for approval to engage the sub-contractor must include the following information:
- (a) the name of the sub-contractor;
 - (b) identification of the micro-credential(s) or part(s) to be provided under the arrangement;
 - (c) the rationale for the proposed sub-contracting arrangement;
 - (d) a copy of the sub-contracting arrangement between the institution and the sub-contractor;
 - (e) evidence of internal quality assurance approval by the institution.
- 14.4 NZQA will grant approval to an application under rule 14.2 where it is satisfied that:
- (a) the institution remains responsible for the sub-contractor meeting all of the institution's obligations that are relevant for the accreditation;
 - (b) the sub-contractor will meet all relevant obligations in the Act and in rules made under section 452 of the Act in relation to the provision of the micro-credential;
 - (c) there is a formal documented arrangement between the holder and the sub-contractor that includes provisions to ensure that NZQA is able to exercise its quality assurance and enforcement powers and functions in respect of the acts or omissions of the sub-contractor relating to the provision of the micro-credential;
 - (d) the information and advertising for the study or training clearly states that it is provided through a sub-contracting arrangement;
 - (e) all student enrolments are through the institution, and the institution maintains all student enrolment and academic information.
- 14.5 To continue to maintain approval under rule 14.4 an institution must ensure the sub-contracting is conducted at all times in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraphs (a) to (e) of rule 14.4.
- 14.6 The use of sub-contractors by universities will be governed by decisions of Universities New Zealand under rule 9.1 and under other powers it may exercise under section 453 of the Act.

15. Special reviews

- 15.1 NZQA will give an institution (*other than a university*) reasonable notice of any special review NZQA intends to undertake in relation to a micro-credential approval or an accreditation of the institution to provide an approved micro-credential.
- 15.2 Notice under rule 15.1 will be given where:
- (a) NZQA from time to time carries out a review of any micro-credentials to which clause 80 of Schedule 1 of the Act applies (*which were formerly training schemes*);
 - (b) concerns about the micro-credential approval or accreditation are raised with NZQA;
 - (c) concerns otherwise come to the attention of NZQA.
- 15.3 The institution must provide relevant information and otherwise cooperate with NZQA for the purposes of the special review.

16. Revocations

16.1 The Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 are revoked.

Explanatory note

This note is not part of these Rules. It is intended to indicate the general effect of these Rules.

These Rules set out, in relation to micro-credential approval and accreditation, -

- (a) the processes for making applications:
- (b) requirements for approval or accreditation to be granted:
- (c) requirements to maintain approval and accreditation:
- (d) where NZQA consent is needed for changes:
- (e) requirements relating to the use of sub-contractors:
- (f) when and how special reviews may occur.

These Rules were re-issued in 2025 to:

- (a) update the definition of level descriptors:
- (b) remove rule 3.2 as it was superfluous:
- (c) add missing wording in rule 8.3.

These Rules are administered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

