



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

This legislation is administered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). For more information please see:

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Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2026

These Rules are made under section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020 by Board of NZQA and the Minister of Education.

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Rules
1 Title

These are the Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2026.

2 Commencement

These Rules come into force on 19 January 2026.

3 Interpretation

In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires,—

Act means the Education and Training Act 2020

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

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

institution has the same meaning as in section 10(1) and (5) of the Act, but excludes universities and relevant schools

ISB means an Industry Skills Board established under section 362 of the Act

level means any of levels 1 to 10 set out in the first column of the NZQCF structure

level descriptors means the descriptors for each level of the Qualification 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

NCEA means the National Certificate of Educational Achievement

NZQA means the New Zealand Qualifications Authority

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

NZQCF logo means the logo that is available from NZQA for approved usage in relation to the NZQCF

NZQCF structure means the structure set out in the Table in Schedule 1, consisting of levels for qualifications and micro-credentials, and the qualification types

qualification developer means a university, a polytechnic, a wānanga, a registered private training establishment, a government training establishment, an ISB, NZQA, or other body that NZQA recognises as capable of meeting the responsibilities of a qualification developer set out in rule 15(1)

qualification type means a type of qualification listed in the second column of the NZQCF structure

qualification-type description means the description for the relevant qualification type set out in Schedule 2

quality assurance body means:

- (a) NZQA:
- (b) Universities New Zealand when it is exercising the powers of NZQA in respect of universities

status means current, expiring, or discontinued status of a qualification or micro-credential, as described in rules 8(1) to 8(5)

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance means applying Te Hono o Te Kahurangi whare ako framework and quality assurance tools for applications to list qualifications, as that framework and those tools are published from time to time by NZQA on its website

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

Listing details for qualifications and micro-credentials

4 Qualification details listed on the NZQCF for all qualifications

- (1) The details for all qualifications to be listed on the NZQCF are:
 - (a) a title for the qualification that properly reflects the qualification:
 - (b) a suitable qualification type and level that aligns with the qualification-type description, and recognises the achievement of a set of graduate outcomes for a particular purpose through formal certification:
 - (c) a statement of the purpose of the qualification which clearly states:
 - (i) for qualifications evaluated using Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance for qualifications, the use of the qualification in Aotearoa, New Zealand, or one or more other countries, and its relevance to ākonga, whānau, hapū, iwi, and where appropriate hapori Māori and other relevant industries or communities:

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- (ii) for all other evaluated qualifications, the use of the qualification in New Zealand, or the use of the qualification in one or more other countries, and its relevance to students, industry, employers, professions, whānau, hapū, iwi, hapori Māori or community groups:
- (d) a suitable outcome statement that:
 - (i) includes a graduate profile which describes the knowledge, skills, and attributes that the graduate will be able to demonstrate upon achieving the qualification:
 - (ii) identifies the education pathways to other qualifications, if any:
 - (iii) identifies, -
 - (A) for qualifications evaluated using Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance for qualifications, either a cultural pathway, an education pathway or an employment pathway relevant to ākonga, whānau, hapū, iwi, and where appropriate hapori Māori, and other relevant industries or communities:
 - (B) for all other evaluated qualifications, either or both of the employment pathways or any contribution to the community, whānau, hapū, iwi, or hapori Māori:
- (e) the credit value:
- (f) the assigned six-digit code from the New Zealand Standard of Classification of Education (NZSCED) system:
- (g) the name of the appointed qualification developer:
- (h) the name or kind of body that awards, or combination of bodies that award, the qualification:
- (i) the intended period for ongoing review, being a period acceptable to NZQA (*or Universities New Zealand in relation to university qualifications*).

5 Further details for qualifications listed at levels 1 to 6 and diplomas at level 7

- (1) Compliance with rule 5(2) by a university is required only where the title of a qualification sought to be listed by the university begins with the words “New Zealand”.
- (2) Subject to rule 5(1), qualifications at levels 1 to 6 and diplomas at level 7, in addition to the details in rule 4(1), must also contain the following details:
 - (a) for titles in English, the generic stem of the title (*except for NCEA*) must begin with the words “New Zealand” (*and for the purposes of section 390(3) of the Act, this amounts to NZQA consent to use the words “New Zealand”*) or, for qualifications with a predominant use in one or more other countries, must begin with the acronym “NZQCF”:
 - (b) after the words “New Zealand” or “NZQCF” (*except for NCEA*) will be the qualification type, then the designator that identifies the main discipline or subject field of the qualification, followed by its level:
 - (c) the title may include other qualifiers such as:
 - (i) the country or countries other than New Zealand in which it has a predominant use:

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- (ii) optional discipline and focus qualifiers:
 - (iii) strands that recognise achievement of specialties:
 - (d) the title must not include the name of a person, organisation, or product unless the applicant satisfies the quality assurance body that there is a sound educational justification for the inclusion:
 - (e) a suitable specification that contains the mandatory conditions set out in rule 5(3) and the optional conditions set out in rule 5(4) for programmes leading to the award of the qualification, which must enable the qualification to be achieved through a range of contexts and learning pathways.
- (3) For the purposes of rule 5(2)(e) mandatory conditions include:
- (a) a description of the minimum relevant and necessary evidence for use by tertiary education organisations to demonstrate how the graduates have met the graduate outcomes:
 - (b) any pre-requisites to meet regulatory body or legislative requirements, such as for health and safety:
 - (c) in relation to standards listed on the Directory, where there are:
 - (i) suitable skill standards on the Directory that fit with the listed purpose and outcome statement required by rule 4(1)(c) and (d), those skill standards must be set out:
 - (ii) standards required for meeting legislative or professional registration requirements, those standards must be set out:
 - (d) the minimum standard of achievement, and standards for grade endorsements such as merit or excellence (*where applicable*).
- (4) For the purposes of rule 5(2)(e) optional conditions include:
- (a) entry requirements, including a range of contexts and learning pathways, and minimum literacy levels:
 - (b) general guidance for programme developers:
 - (c) the context for delivery or assessment:
 - (d) any practicum requirements.

6 Micro-credential details listed on the NZQCF

- (1) The details for all micro-credentials to be listed on the NZQCF are:
- (a) a suitable title:
 - (b) the credit value and the level it most closely aligns with, taking into account the level descriptors for that level:
 - (c) the assigned six-digit code from the New Zealand Standard of Classification of Education (NZSCED) system:
 - (d) a purpose and outcome statement that:
 - (i) states the use of the micro-credential in New Zealand or one or more other countries:

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- (ii) describes the relevance of the micro-credential to students, whānau, hapū, iwi, hāpori Māori, industry, employers, professions, or community groups, as appropriate:
 - (iii) describes the knowledge, skills, and attributes that the learner will be able to demonstrate upon achieving the micro-credential:
 - (iv) identifies the education pathways to qualifications or other credentials, if any:
 - (v) identifies a cultural or employment pathway or any contribution to the community, whānau, hapū, iwi, or hāpori Māori:
- (e) the name of the appointed micro-credential developer:
- (f) any standards that are used:
- (g) the period for ongoing review, being a period acceptable to NZQA (*or Universities New Zealand in relation to university micro-credentials*).
- (2) The title of a micro-credential must not include:
 - (a) any of the words “New Zealand”, “national”, “diploma”, “degree”, “bachelor”, “master”, “doctor”, “under-graduate” or “post-graduate” where it may cause confusion with a qualification on the NZQCF; or
 - (b) the name of a person, organisation, or product unless the applicant satisfies NZQA (*or Universities New Zealand in relation to university applicants*) that there is a sound justification for the inclusion.

7 Use of te reo Māori in listing qualifications and micro-credentials

- (1) A qualification may be listed in te reo Māori instead of or in addition to English, and in place of the words “New Zealand” a reo Māori translation for “New Zealand” may be used for the purposes of rule 5(2)(a).
- (2) A micro-credential may be listed in te reo Māori instead of or in addition to English, where the listing in te reo Māori is consistent with rule 6.
- (3) The use of te reo Māori in all listed qualifications and micro-credentials must be consistent with aspirations for Mātauranga Māori.
- (4) Where qualifications or micro-credentials are listed in te reo Māori, the listing details in rule 4(1)(c) and (d)(i) for qualifications, or in rule 6(1)(d)(iii) for micro-credentials, will contain an English description

8 Status of qualifications and micro-credentials on the NZQCF

- (1) Qualifications and micro-credentials on the NZQCF will be assigned one of three kinds of status by NZQA: current, expiring, or discontinued.
- (2) Qualifications and micro-credentials with current status are those in current use, and programmes leading to such qualifications, and those micro-credentials, may be offered and provided to students in accordance with the Act and with rules made under section 452 of the Act.
- (3) Qualifications and micro-credentials with expiring status are those:
 - (a) which are being replaced with a new qualification or micro-credential; or
 - (b) for which a decision has been made for them to be discontinued in the future.

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- (4) Qualifications and micro-credentials with expiring status:
 - (a) may continue to be available to students enrolled in a programme of study or training leading to the expiring qualification, and to students enrolled in an approved expiring micro-credential, but no new students may be enrolled in that qualification or micro-credential from the time the qualification or micro-credential is assigned expiring status by NZQA; and
 - (b) will have a time limit for the expiry period, following which they will be assigned discontinued status.
- (5) For qualifications and micro-credentials with discontinued status:
 - (a) the qualification or micro-credential may no longer be awarded unless all qualification or micro-credential requirements were completed prior to its discontinuation; and
 - (b) programmes leading to discontinued qualifications must not be offered or provided and discontinued micro-credentials must not be offered or provided.

9 Amendment of listing details on the NZQCF

- (1) At the request of the qualification or micro-credential developer, or where the quality assurance body considers it necessary in the circumstances, the listing details may be amended.
- (2) Where the quality assurance body considers it necessary to amend the listing details, the qualification or micro-credential developer will be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to respond.

10 Removal of a qualification or micro-credential from the NZQCF

- (1) NZQA will remove a qualification or micro-credential from the NZQCF where it has been listed by mistake.

Applications to list qualifications and micro-credentials

11 Content and process for applications for approval to list qualifications on the NZQCF

- (1) Applications for approval to list qualifications on the NZQCF must:
 - (a) contain the details set out in rule 4(1) and (*where relevant*) rule 6; and
 - (b) for qualifications at levels 1 to 6 and diplomas at level 7 also contain the details required by:
 - (i) rules 5(1) and 5(2); and
 - (ii) rule 11(2) (*other than university applications*).
- (2) The following additional requirements apply to applications (*other than ISB applications*) to list qualifications at levels 1 to 6 and diplomas at level 7:
 - (a) a stakeholder profile must be provided which identifies individuals and/or organisations with a “stake” in the outcome of the qualification, including the following mandatory stakeholders:
 - (i) an ISB where the qualification in the application relates to any of its specified industries:

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- (ii) any other standard setting body where the qualification in the application relates to an area of responsibility of that standard setting body:
 - (iii) regulatory bodies where the qualification in the application relates to an area of responsibility of that regulatory body:
 - (iv) providers who are likely to be accredited to provide a programme leading to the qualification, or a sample of providers of a similar qualification:
 - (b) a list of the stakeholders from the stakeholder profile that had significant involvement in the development of the qualification:
 - (c) copies of relevant stakeholder attestations, with those attestations showing the nature, degree and reason for each stakeholder's involvement in the development of the qualification:
 - (d) evidence of a comprehensive needs analysis that identifies and confirms the distinct need in New Zealand for the qualification, or in the other country or countries in which the qualification has a predominant use (*including evidence of satisfying the requirements of the relevant regulatory body or bodies of that country or those countries*):
 - (e) evidence of decisions made in the development of the qualification.
- (3) In addition to supplying the details required in rule 11(1), applicants may:
- (a) for the purposes of rule 7 request that the qualification is listed in te reo Māori instead of or in addition to English, and may choose whether to include a reo Māori translation for “New Zealand”:
 - (b) request that Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance is used for assessment of the application, and
 - (i) answer the following pātai aromātai for the six kaupapa set out in rule 11(4) - Kei te tutuki te tono nei i ngā kaupapa o Te Hono o Te Kahurangi?; and
 - (ii) provide a self-reflective summary which shows how the applicant meets the criteria expressed through ngā kaupapa o Te Hono o Te Kahurangi.
- (4) For the purposes of rule 11(3)(b) the kaupapa as consistent with Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance are:
- (a) rangatiratanga:
 - (b) whanaungatanga:
 - (c) manaakitanga:
 - (d) pūkengatanga:
 - (e) kaitiakitanga:
 - (f) Te Reo Māori.
- (5) An applicant making a request under rule 11(3)(b), in addition to providing the information required under this rule 11, must provide the information that Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance framework and tools require.
- (6) NZQA will evaluate a request made under rule 11(3)(b), together with the information supplied, in accordance with Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance.

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- (7) NZQA may release an applicant from all or part of the requirements in rule 11(2)(c) or (d) where the applicant satisfies NZQA there is good reason to do so.

12 Content and process for applications for approval to list micro-credentials on the NZQCF

- (1) Applications for approval to list micro-credentials on the NZQCF must contain the details set out in rule 6(1) and (*where relevant*) rule 7.
- (2) Applicants, in addition to supplying the details set out in rule 6(1), may:
- (a) for the purposes of rule 7 request that the micro-credential is listed in te reo Māori instead of or in addition to English;
 - (b) request that Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance is used for assessment of the application, and answer the following pātai aromātai for the six kaupapa set out in rule 11(4) - Kei te tutuki te tono nei i ngā kaupapa o Te Hono o Te Kahurangi?
- (3) NZQA will not list a micro-credential that has a credit value of more than 40 credits and either -
- (a) is substantially similar to a qualification on the NZQCF; or
 - (b) has outcomes that are more suited to being listed as a qualification on the NZQCF.
- (4) Where there are suitable skill standards on the Directory that fit with the listed purpose and outcome statement required by rule 6(1)(d), those skill standards must be set out in the listing details for the purposes of rule 6(1)(f).

13 Approval of qualification and micro-credential applications for listing

- (1) NZQA will advise applicants if any of the requirements for the application require further work.
- (2) Where NZQA is satisfied that the requirements for the application have been met, and that the qualification or micro-credential developer is properly capable of meeting the developer's responsibilities in rule 15, NZQA will:
- (a) advise the applicant that the application has been approved;
 - (b) proceed to list the qualification or micro-credential on the NZQCF; and
 - (c) give the qualification or micro-credential a unique listing number.
- (3) Where NZQA is not satisfied that the requirements are met, or not satisfied that the developer is properly capable of meeting the developer's responsibilities, NZQA will not approve the application.

14 Listing of approved qualifications and micro-credentials

- (1) NZQA will list a certificate at levels 1 to 6, and a diploma at levels 5 to 7, only where it is satisfied that the certificate or diploma does not duplicate an existing certificate or diploma, that there is a distinct need for the certificate or diploma, and that it will meet the outcomes as stated in the outcome statement required in rule 4(1)(d).
- (2) Where a qualification or micro-credential has been evaluated using Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance, NZQA will indicate this in the listing details.

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- (3) In listing a qualification NZQA will:
 - (a) list the relevant details set out in rules 4(1) and 5(2), and (*where applicable*) the details in rules 7(1), 7(2) and 7(4):
 - (b) assign current status to the qualification:
 - (c) assign different review periods to those set out in rule 4(1)(i) where NZQA believes that different review periods are needed.
- (4) In listing an approved micro-credential NZQA will:
 - (a) list the relevant details set out in rule 6(1), and (*where applicable*) the details in rules 7(1), 7(2) and 7(4):
 - (b) assign current status to the micro-credential:
 - (c) assign different review periods to those set out in rule 6(1)(g) where NZQA believes that different review periods are needed.
- (5) Universities New Zealand will:
 - (a) approve applications from universities for listing qualifications where the applications meet the requirements in rule 4(1);
 - (b) list the approved qualifications on the NZQCF or arrange for NZQA to do so; and
 - (c) before approving the content of any micro-credential under section 445 of the Act or granting any accreditation under section 446A of the Act, ensure the micro-credential has been listed by NZQA on the NZQCF.

Qualification and micro-credential developers**15 Responsibilities of qualification and micro-credential developers**

- (1) Qualification and micro-credential developers must:
 - (a) review the qualification or micro-credential within each review period specified for it, following the current guidelines published by the quality assurance body on its website:
 - (b) actively participate and cooperate in the process of NZQA initiated wider reviews of suites of qualifications or micro-credentials, and of individual qualifications or micro-credentials, and provide information requested by NZQA for the purposes of the process.

16 Qualification or micro-credential developers (*other than universities*) that are not meeting their responsibilities

- (1) Where NZQA considers that a qualification or micro-credential developer (*other than a university*) is not meeting its responsibilities under rule 15, NZQA will notify the developer and the original applicant for approval for listing the qualification (*where the applicant is a different person*) and seek their views including any remedial action the developer intends to take.
- (2) Where NZQA has given the notice under rule 16(1) and remains satisfied that a developer is not meeting its responsibilities under rule 15, and that the developer has no effective remedial plan, then:

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- (a) NZQA may require a replacement developer to be appointed within a specified time period, being a developer that NZQA is satisfied will meet the responsibilities under rule 15, and may amend the listing details accordingly:
- (b) NZQA may appoint the replacement developer if there is no replacement developer appointed under paragraph (a) within the specified time:
- (c) NZQA may alter the status of the qualification or micro-credential on the NZQCF.

17 Unsatisfactory reviews of qualifications (*other than university qualifications*) or micro-credentials, and failure to award or failure to review

- (1) NZQA may, where it considers that a satisfactory result is not being achieved from any reviews of one or more qualifications (*other than university qualifications*) or micro-credentials, -
 - (a) notify the relevant qualification or micro-credential developers of the details of a further review process and the timeframes for that review:
 - (b) consult known interested parties in the review process, and take their views into account:
 - (c) reach an interim decision on the qualifications needed and advise the interested parties of the interim decision and the reasons for it:
 - (d) ask the interested parties for submissions on the interim decision, and take those submissions into account in reaching a final decision:
 - (e) notify the interested parties of the final decision, the reasons for the decision, and the timeframes and process for implementing the final decision:
 - (f) list the qualifications or micro-credentials needed that are not already listed, insert any relevant listing details for the resulting qualifications or micro-credentials, and assign an expiring status to qualifications or micro-credentials not required.
- (2) NZQA may assign expiring status to a qualification or micro-credential in the following circumstances:
 - (a) in respect of qualifications:
 - (i) where the qualification has not been awarded for 5 consecutive years:
 - (ii) where the qualification has not been reviewed within one year following its listed review period (*see rule 4(1)(i)*), and is not under review at that point in time:
 - (b) in respect of micro-credentials:
 - (i) where the micro-credential has not been awarded for 3 consecutive years:
 - (ii) where the micro-credential has not been reviewed within one year following its listed review period (*see rule 6(1)(g)*), and is not under review at that point in time.
- (3) Before assigning expiring status under rule 17(2) NZQA will give reasonable notice to the relevant qualification or micro-credential developer, and opportunity to respond.

Award of qualifications and micro-credentials, and credit reporting for qualifications**18 Award of qualifications and micro-credentials**

- (1) Subject to rules 18(3) and 18(4), qualifications at levels 1 to 6, diplomas at level 7, and micro-credentials may be awarded by:
 - (a) an institution accredited under section 441 or 446A of the Act to provide the programme leading to the qualification or provide the approved micro-credential; or
 - (b) where there is good reason for the institution in (a) not awarding the qualification or micro-credential, an institution with a programme approval under section 439 of the Act in respect of the qualification or a micro-credential approval under section 445 of the Act in respect of the micro-credential; or
 - (c) the qualification or micro-credential developer where there is good reason, as approved by NZQA, for the qualification or micro-credential not being awarded by the organisations described in rule 18(1)(a) or (b); or
 - (d) NZQA where there is good reason for the qualification or micro-credential not being awarded by the organisations described in rule 18(1)(a) - (c).
- (2) Subject to rules 18(3) and 18(4), qualifications at levels 7 -10 (*except for diplomas at level 7*) may be awarded by the body or combination of bodies listed for that qualification for the purposes of rule 4(1)(h).
- (3) The formal document certifying the award of a qualification or micro-credential to a person:
 - (a) must contain the following information:
 - (i) the qualification or micro-credential title, including for qualifications any majors or strands where relevant;
 - (ii) NZQCF reference number;
 - (iii) the full legal name of the person and their national student number;
 - (iv) the date the qualification or micro-credential was awarded to or conferred on the person and the date the formal document was issued;
 - (v) the name of the awarding institution;
 - (vi) the language or languages of instruction where the instruction was not in English or te reo Māori;
 - (b) where it is for a certificate at levels 1 to 5 (*inclusive*), a diploma at levels 5 to 7 (*inclusive*), or a micro-credential, must bear the NZQCF logo and include any further information specified by NZQA on its website.
- (4) Rules 18(1) - 18(3) do not apply to NCEA or to university qualifications, and rules 18(1) and 18(3) do not apply to university micro-credentials.

19 Reporting the award of qualifications and micro-credentials

- (1) An institution that awards a qualification or micro-credential to a person must report the award:
 - (a) to NZQA within 3 months of date of the award, in the manner set out from time to time on the NZQA website; or

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- (b) to TEC in the next reporting round for completions after the date of the award.

20 Credit reporting for qualifications

- (1) An institution (*other than a relevant school or university*) reporting an award of a qualification to a person under rule 19 must also report to NZQA the credits gained by the person.
- (2) Institutions must pay the credit reporting fees set by NZQA under section 457(1)(a)(xi) of the Act by the end of the month following the month of the invoice from NZQA.
- (3) This rule 20 applies to credits gained by students from 19 January 2026.
- (4) Nothing in this rule 20 affects the requirements for reporting of credits for standards and payment of the credit reporting fees under the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules made from time to time under section 452 of the Act.

Revocation**21 Revocation**

- (1) The Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2025 are revoked.

Schedule 1

NZQCF Structure - Levels for qualifications and micro-credentials, and qualification types

Level	Qualification types	Micro-credentials
1	Certificate	Micro-credential
2	Certificate	Micro-credential
3	Certificate	Micro-credential
4	Certificate	Micro-credential
5	Certificate Diploma	Micro-credential
6	Certificate Diploma	Micro-credential
7	Diploma Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma Bachelor's Degree	Micro-credential
8	Postgraduate Certificate Postgraduate Diploma Bachelor Honours Degree	Micro-credential
9	Master's Degree	Micro-credential
10	Doctoral Degree	Micro-credential

Schedule 2

**NZQCF Qualification-type descriptions | Ngā whakaahuahanga o ngā momo tohu i te
NZQCF**

Level Te Kaupae	Qualification type Te momo tohu	Purpose Te pūtake	Credit requirements Ngā here ā- whiwhinga	Outcomes Ngā putanga
1	Certificate level 1 He Pōkaitahi Kaupae 1	Qualifies individuals with basic knowledge and skills for a field of study, work and/or community involvement.	A minimum of 40 credits at level 1 or above.	A graduate of a level 1 certificate is able to: demonstrate knowledge of some facts and information relevant to a field of study; perform simple activities; identify simple problems or goals; contribute to group or team activities; communicate basic information; work in a highly structured environment; work mostly under supervision with limited responsibility for own learning and performance.
2	Certificate level 2 He Pōkaitahi Kaupae 2	Qualifies individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a field of study, work and/or community involvement.	A minimum of 40 credits at level 2 or above.	A graduate of a level 2 certificate is able to: demonstrate knowledge of some facts and information and understanding of some concepts relevant to a field of work or study; perform a range of familiar activities; identify simple problems or goals and recommend a solution or plan; contribute to group or team activities and acknowledge views and experiences of others; communicate basic information and share ideas on familiar topics; work in a highly structured environment; work under some supervision with some responsibility for own learning and performance.
3	Certificate level 3 He Pōkaitahi Kaupae 3	Qualifies individuals with knowledge and skills for a specific role(s) within fields/areas of work and/or preparation for further study.	A minimum of 40 credits at level 3 or above.	A graduate of a level 3 certificate is able to: demonstrate knowledge of some key facts and information in a field of work or study and understanding of the underpinning concepts; perform some unfamiliar activities; examine familiar problems or goals and recommend a solution or plan; contribute significantly to group or team activities and acknowledge views and experiences of others; communicate familiar information and share ideas on some unfamiliar topics; work in a structured environment; work mostly autonomously with responsibility for own learning and performance.

4	Certificate level 4 He Pōkaitahi Kaupae 4	Qualifies individuals with knowledge and skills to work or study in broad or specialised field(s)/areas.	A minimum of 40 credits at level 4 or above.	A graduate of a level 4 certificate is able to: demonstrate knowledge of the key facts and information in a field of work or study and understanding of the underpinning concepts and key principles; perform moderately complex or unfamiliar activities; examine unfamiliar problems and recommend a solution or plan; help create a collaborative culture within a group or team by role modelling and encouraging the contributions of others; communicate familiar information and share ideas on a range of unfamiliar topics; work in a structured environment with some unpredictability; work autonomously with responsibility for own learning and performance and some responsibility for others in workplace contexts.
5	Certificate level 5 He Pōkaitahi Kaupae 5	Qualifies individuals with in-depth technical or theoretical knowledge and skills within an aspect of a specific field of work or study.	A minimum of 40 credits at level 5 or above.	A graduate of a level 5 certificate is able to: demonstrate in-depth technical or theoretical knowledge within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study and understanding of the underpinning concepts and key principles; customise an approach for completing moderately complex or unfamiliar activities; apply problem-solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems; lead the creation of a collaborative group or team culture; communicate moderately complex information and share ideas with an unknown audience using an appropriate communication medium and method; work in a dynamic environment; take responsibility for managing activities and projects and managing others in workplace contexts.
	Diploma level 5 He Pōkairua Kaupae 5	Qualifies individuals with in-depth technical or theoretical knowledge and skills within a specific field of work or study.	A minimum of 120 credits at level 4 or above including at least 72 credits at level 5 or above.	A graduate of a level 5 diploma is able to: demonstrate in-depth technical or theoretical knowledge in a specific field of work or study and understanding of the underpinning concepts and key principles; customise an approach for completing moderately complex or unfamiliar activities; apply problem-solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems; lead the creation of a collaborative group or team culture; communicate moderately complex information and share ideas with an unknown audience using an appropriate communication medium and method; work in a dynamic environment; take responsibility for managing activities and projects and managing others in workplace contexts.

6	Certificate level 6 He Pōkaitahi Kaupae 6	Qualifies individuals with specialised technical or theoretical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specialised or strategic context.	A minimum of 40 credits at level 6 or above.	A graduate of a level 6 certificate is able to: demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study and understanding of the underpinning concepts and key principles; develop new methods for completing moderately complex or unfamiliar activities; adapt problem-solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems; lead a group or team on moderately complex projects and motivate others; communicate moderately complex information and share ideas with a range of audiences using customised communication media and methods; work in a dynamic environment with some ambiguity; take responsibility for leading and managing activities and projects, and leading and managing one or more teams in workplace contexts.
	Diploma level 6 He Pōkairua Kaupae 6	Qualifies individuals with specialised technical or theoretical knowledge and skills in specialised/strategic contexts.	A minimum of 120 credits at level 5 or above including at least 72 credits at level 6 or above.	A graduate of a level 6 diploma is able to: demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge in a specific field of work or study and understanding of the underpinning concepts and key principles; develop new methods for completing moderately complex or unfamiliar activities; adapt problem-solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems; lead a group or team on moderately complex projects and motivate others; communicate moderately complex information and share ideas with a range of audiences using customised communication media and methods; work in a dynamic environment with some ambiguity; take responsibility for leading and managing activities and projects, and leading and managing one or more teams in workplace contexts.

Level Te Kaupae	Qualification type Te momo tohu	Purpose Te pūtake	Credit requirements Ngā here ā- whiwhinga	Entry Te paeuru	Outcomes and relationship with other qualifications Ngā putanga me te honongā ki ētahi atu tohu
7	Diploma level 7 He Pōkairua Kaupae 7	Qualifies individuals with specialist technical knowledge and skills within a niche area of study or specialist vocational context. A programme of study leading to a level 7 diploma builds on significant prior achievement within the same or a related area of study.	A minimum of 120 credits at level 5 or above including at least 72 credits at level 7 or above.	Open to those who have achieved 120 credits at level 5 or above or equivalent, within the same or a related area of study.	A graduate of a level 7 diploma is able to: demonstrate broad knowledge of a range of technical or theoretical concepts and a systematic understanding of an area of professional practice or body of knowledge; apply highly developed skills and specialised methods to perform complex activities; examine an area of professional practice or body of knowledge and generate solutions for complex problems; lead or collaborate within a group or team on cross-functional projects and motivate others; communicate complex information and share insights with a range of audiences using optimised communication media and methods; work in a dynamic environment with frequent ambiguity; take responsibility for own professional practice and development.

Level Te Kaupae	Qualification type Te momo tohu	Purpose Te pūtake	Credit requirements Ngā here ā-whiwhinga	Entry Te paeuru	Outcomes and relationship with other qualifications Ngā putanga me te honongā ki ētahi atu tohu
7	Bachelor's Degree He Tohu Paetahi	<p>Provides individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject (or subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major), as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning.</p> <p>A Bachelor's Degree involves at least one sequential study programme in which content is progressively developed such that it might form a basis for postgraduate study and/or professional practice.</p> <p>Bachelor's Degrees are taught mainly by people engaged in research.</p>	<p>A minimum of 360 credits at levels 5 to 7, with a minimum of 72 credits at level 7 or above.</p> <p>Some Bachelor's Degrees, notably in professional fields such as engineering, the health sciences and law, encompass additional credits and may require a longer period of study. For example, an eight-semester (four-year) degree would normally be equivalent to 480 credits.</p> <p>The degree should specify a spread of credits across levels, so that the qualification demonstrates progression, reflects the requirements of the degree definition and achieves the associated learning outcomes in a way that is appropriate to the subject area.</p>	<p>Open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements, normally at level 3 on the NZQCF.</p> <p>A programme of study leading to a Bachelor's Degree builds on prior study, work or experience.</p>	<p>A graduate of a Bachelor's Degree is able to: demonstrate intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytic rigour; engage in self-directed learning; demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject; demonstrate the skills needed to acquire, understand and assess information from a range of sources; demonstrate communication and collaborative skills.</p> <p>A person who holds a Bachelor's Degree might be eligible to enrol in a postgraduate qualification.</p>

Level Te Kaupae	Qualification type Te momo tohu	Purpose Te pūtake	Credit requirements Ngā here ā- whiwhinga	Entry Te paeuru	Outcomes and relationship with other qualifications Ngā putanga me te honongā ki ētahi atu tohu
7	Graduate Certificate He Pōkaitahi Paetahi	Designed primarily as a vehicle for degree or equivalent level diploma graduates to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level. Typically designed as a bridging qualification to postgraduate study for individuals developing educational, professional or vocational knowledge in a new discipline, profession or subject area; and/or as a broadening or deepening of skills or knowledge already gained in an undergraduate qualification.	A minimum of 60 credits, including at least 40 credits at level 7 or above.	Entry is open to degree graduates. However, subject to the regulations of the award, those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind may be granted admission.	In addition to the Bachelor's Degree outcomes, a person with a Graduate Certificate is able to demonstrate some outcomes of a Bachelor's Degree in a new area of study. A Graduate Certificate may provide the basis for postgraduate study.
	Graduate Diploma He Pōkairua Paetahi	Allows degree graduates to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced undergraduate level. Typically designed as a bridging qualification to postgraduate study, as well as broadening knowledge and skills in a familiar subject or discipline, or developing knowledge in a new area.	A minimum of 120 credits, including at least 72 credits at level 7 or above.	Entry is open to degree graduates. However, subject to the regulations of the award, those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind may be granted admission.	In addition to the Bachelor's Degree outcomes, a person with a Graduate Diploma is able to demonstrate some outcomes of a Bachelor's Degree in a new area of study. A Graduate Diploma may provide the basis for postgraduate study.

Level Te Kaupae	Qualification type Te momo tohu	Purpose Te pūtake	Credit requirements Ngā here ā-whiwhinga	Entry Te paeuru	Outcomes and relationship with other qualifications Ngā putanga me te honongā ki ētahi atu tohu
8	Bachelor Honours Degree He Tāhū Paetahi	<p>Recognises study at an advanced level. It prepares qualification holders for entry into professional practice in some disciplines and/or provides a supported introduction to independent research carried out at higher levels.</p> <p>It may be either a 480-credit (or more) degree with study at an advanced level that requires a particular level of achievement, or a discrete 120-credit degree following a Bachelor's degree.</p> <p>Research in the context of a Bachelor Honours Degree develops an individual's ability to design and undertake a project under supervision, and to report on this in an appropriate way. It sharpens the individual's analytical and communication skills and provides a supported introduction to planning, conducting and reporting on the type of independent research that may be undertaken at higher levels.</p> <p>The award of honours recognises outstanding achievement, meritorious achievement or a pass. These may be termed first class honours, second class honours: first or second divisions, and third-class honours.</p>	<p>A minimum of 120 credits at level 8 or above including a research component of at least 30 credits.</p> <p>A 480-credit (or more) degree has a minimum 480 credits. At least 120 credits are at level 8 or above including a research component of at least 30 credits.</p> <p>In special cases¹ a 480-credit (or more) degree may have a minimum 60 credits at level 8 or above including a research component of at least 30 credits at level 9.</p>	<p>A 480-credit (or more) degree is open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements, normally at level 3 on the NZQCF.</p> <p>Entry to a 120-credit discrete degree is normally based on achievement of above average performance in the credits within the Bachelor's Degree that are relevant to the proposed honours study.</p>	<p>A graduate of a Bachelor Honours Degree is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in self-directed learning and advanced study; demonstrate intellectual independence, analytic rigour, and the ability to understand and evaluate new knowledge and ideas; demonstrate the ability to identify topics for original research, plan and conduct research, analyse results, and communicate the findings to the satisfaction of subject experts. <p>Achieved to an appropriate standard, a Bachelor Honours Degree should prepare graduates for admission to further postgraduate study.</p>

Postgraduate Certificate He Pōkaitahi Tautara	Designed to extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills. A Postgraduate Certificate involves credits from a specified subject and related areas. It recognises continuing professional development or academic achievement in advance of a Bachelor's Degree.	A minimum of 60 credits at level 8 or above.	A Bachelor's Degree, or Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma in a related subject, or relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience.	A graduate of a Postgraduate Certificate is able to show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice. A Postgraduate Certificate provides the basis for further postgraduate study.
Postgraduate Diploma He Pōkairua Tautara	Designed to extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills. A Postgraduate Diploma recognises continuing professional development or academic achievement in advance of a Bachelor's Degree. A Postgraduate Diploma may be awarded with distinction.	A minimum of 120 credits at levels 7 and above, with a minimum of 72 credits from level 8.	A Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma, or relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience.	A graduate of a Postgraduate Diploma is able to show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice. A person who holds a Postgraduate Diploma may be eligible to enrol in a Master's Degree.

¹ Special cases are most likely to be degrees in which professional or accreditation requirements make it difficult to meet the 120-credit level 8/9 requirement, e.g. degrees in law or engineering.

Level Te Kaupae	Qualification type Te momo tohu	Purpose Te pūtake	Credit requirements Ngā here ā- whiwhinga	Entry Te paeuru	Structure Te hanga	Outcomes and relationship with other qualifications Ngā putanga me te honongā ki ētahi atu tohu
9	Master's Degree He Tohu Paerua	Qualifies individuals who can apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research, a pathway for further learning, professional practice and/or scholarship. A Master's Degree is at a level demonstrably in advance of undergraduate study. It requires individuals to engage in research, advanced scholarship or demonstrate an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice.	A minimum of 120 credits at levels 8 and above, with at least 40 credits at level 9. Master's Degrees typically consist of 120, 180, or 240 or more credits.	A minimum entry qualification of a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent. For a Master's Degree of less than 240 credits, additional entry requirements are: For a 120-credit Master's Degree: a Bachelor Honours Degree, a Postgraduate Diploma or an undergraduate degree followed by relevant professional experience. In exceptional circumstances a pathway from a four-year undergraduate degree to a 120-credit Master's Degree may be established. For a 180-credit Master's Degree: a Bachelor's Degree completed at a specified level of attainment. Providers of programmes leading to a Master's Degree are responsible for establishing entry requirements.	Master's Degrees are constituted in one discipline or coherent programme of study. They may be undertaken by taught courses or research, or by a combination of both. A Master's Degree predominantly by research includes a thesis or creative work worth at least 90 credits. A Master's Degree predominantly by coursework is achieved through courses, project work, creative work and research in varying combinations. It builds on undergraduate study in the same academic field, on the more generic graduate	A graduate of a Master's Degree is able to: show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice; demonstrate mastery of sophisticated theoretical subject matter; evaluate critically the findings and discussions in the literature; research, analyse and argue from evidence; work independently and apply knowledge to new situations; engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving. If a Master's Degree includes a component of supervised research of not fewer than 40 credits at level 9, the graduate is also able to: demonstrate a high order of skill in the planning, execution and completion of a piece of

				<p>Admission as an individual to a Master's Degree is based on the evaluation of documentary evidence (including the academic record) of the individual applicant's ability to undertake postgraduate study in a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice. Exceptionally, applicants not meeting the minimum entry qualification requirement but with extensive, substantial and appropriate documented professional experience may be considered.</p>	<p>attributes of an undergraduate degree in other fields or, in some cases, on relevant professional experience. Master's Degrees that build on generic attributes and/or experience (often called 'conversion Master's') are usually in professional fields and are recognised as appropriate professional preparation by the profession or industry concerned.²</p>	<p>original research or creative scholarly work; apply such skills learned during the study programme to new situations. The research should be completed to internationally recognised standards and demonstrate that the graduate has a capacity for independent thinking. A person who holds a Master's Degree achieved to an appropriate standard, that includes a research component of at least 40 credits at level 9, may be considered for admission to a programme of advanced study and/or original research leading to a Doctoral Degree.</p>
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² In limited situations, a longer coursework Master's Degree of at least 360 credits and aiming at preparation for professional practice may have a title that includes the word 'doctor'. These are cases where the title does not cause confusion with a doctoral degree at level 10 of the NZQCF and where there are established international conventions for the title within the profession concerned. For example the Juris Doctor is internationally recognised as a postgraduate initial legal qualification.

Level Te Kaupae	Qualification type Te momo tohu	Purpose Te pūtake	Credit requirements Ngā here ā- whiwhinga	Entry Te paeuru	Types Ngā momo	Outcomes Ngā putanga
10	Doctoral Degree He Tohu Kairangi	A research degree leading to a substantial and original contribution to knowledge. It is normally the culmination of study which begins at the bachelor level and reaches a stage beyond the masters, whereby the individual becomes an increasingly independent scholar. For the PhD/DPhil and named doctorates, the development takes place under the guidance of recognised experts in the field of study and under circumstances that allow the individual access to appropriate research resources. The contribution to knowledge is judged by independent experts applying contemporary international standards of the discipline. The hallmark will be the individual's substantial	A Doctoral Degree requires at least 360 credits at level 10. Normally this represents 3 to 4 years of full-time study.	A Bachelor Honours or Master's Degree achieved to a specified level (which includes having undertaken research), an approved international equivalent, or other approved evidence of adequate training and ability.	The following types of Doctoral Degree are recognised: Doctor of Philosophy A thesis constitutes the entire body of work on which the award of the qualification will be judged. Coursework may also be prescribed for the individual, but this will only contribute to the preparation for the doctoral research. Where appropriate, individuals may include creative work as part of the thesis requirement. Doctorate in a specified field or discipline - the named doctorate For a doctorate in a specified field, coursework may contribute to the assessed programme of study, but research which may include scholarly creative activity and the associated thesis must occupy at least two full-time academic years and	A graduate of a doctoral degree is able to: design and conduct or supervise research or projects for the generation of new knowledge or innovation in a specialist field; make informed judgements on complex issues; contribute the advancement of learning and/or professional practice.

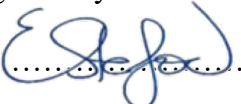
		<p>development as an independent researcher as attested by the educational institution and/or as demonstrated by submitted work. The major component of all doctorates is original research, which can include a substantial contribution to an established, multidisciplinary, collaborative research activity.</p> <p>The body of work that leads to the award of a doctorate will be one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a thesis, which may include published work creative work with an exegesis coursework in combination with a thesis, which may include published work, or creative work with an exegesis. 	<p>Further criteria He paearu atu anō</p> <p>A higher degrees committee, or its equivalent, has general oversight of the admission, progress and assessment of a candidate for a Doctoral Degree. It will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the programme is coherent the candidate's progress is monitored by regular reports the assessment is appropriate and fair, and includes provision for two external examiners for the body of work, one of whom should be from outside of New Zealand any taught components that contribute to the overall result are subject to external assessment. One of the external assessors should normally be from an overseas institution. 	<p>contribute not less than two-thirds of the overall credit for the degree. The coursework, which is to be at a standard in advance of that expected for a master's paper, must be part of a coherent programme with the research work, and should normally cover no more than one full-time academic year.</p> <p>An individual for a named doctorate must gain a passing grade in both the coursework and the thesis, which may include creative work.</p> <p>Higher Doctorate</p> <p>Higher Doctorates are awarded for work of special excellence, as judged by experts of international standing, which is completed before a person makes an application to enrol for the degree. Individuals will normally be expected to have completed at least ten years of scholarly work and to have published extensively. Publication will normally be in scholarly books and/or in reputable international journals. Individuals in the visual or performing arts will have made equally outstanding contributions in their creative work.</p>	
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Made by:

Board Chair signature: 

Date: 8 December 2025

City or town where signed: Wellington City

Minister of Education signature: 

Date: 19 December 2025

City or town where signed: Auckland

Board of NZQA and the Minister of Education

Explanatory note

This note is not part of the Rules but is intended to indicate their general effect.

These Rules set out, in relation to listing of qualifications and micro-credentials on the NZQCF, -

- (a) the necessary listing details:
- (b) their status (*current, expiring, or discontinued*):
- (c) amendments and removals:
- (d) the application and listing process:

- (e) responsibilities of qualification and micro-credential developers:
- (f) the consequences of unsatisfactory reviews:
- (g) awarding, including minimum information for the formal document certifying the award.

These Rules were re-issued on 19 January 2026 to:

- (a) adjust terminology to reflect amendments made by the Education and Training (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Act 2026 (*eg: the change from Te Pūkenga to polytechnics and WDCs to ISBs*):
- (b) changes to review periods for qualifications and micro-credentials:
- (c) provide a process for assigning expiring status to qualifications and micro-credentials that have not been awarded or reviewed for a specified period of time:
- (d) remove references to consistency reviews as they are discontinued with effect from 1 January 2026:
- (e) provide a process for qualification expiry when the qualification has not been awarded for 5 consecutive years or not reviewed within one year following its listed review period:
- (f) provide a process for micro-credential expiry when the micro-credential has not been awarded for 3 consecutive years or not reviewed within one year following its listed review period:
- (g) provide for credit reporting.

This is secondary legislation issued under the authority of the Legislation Act 2019 .	
Title	Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2026
Principal or amendment	Principal
Consolidated version	No
Empowering Act and provisions	Education and Training Act 2020, section 452
Replacement empowering Act and provisions	Not applicable

Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2026

Maker name	Board of NZQA and the Minister of Education
Administering agency	New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)
Date made	[day month year] <i>[Insert date of signing/approval. For consolidations use the publication date of the original “as-made” principal version].</i>
Publication date	Click or tap to enter a date <i>[Insert date first published/made available. For consolidations use the publication date of the original “as-made” principal version]</i>
Notification date	Not applicable
Commencement date	19 January 2026
End date (when applicable)	Not applicable
Consolidation as at date	Not applicable
Related instruments	Not applicable