

Hon Jan Tinetti

Minister of Education
Minister for Women
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction



Hon Tracey Martin
Chair
New Zealand Qualifications Authority |
Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
By email:

Tēnā koe Tracey

New Zealand Qualifications Authority | Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa Letter of Expectations 2023

As I take on an expanded education portfolio as the new Minister of Education, I want to reconfirm the Government's priorities for the education system, and my expectations about the role of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority | Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa (NZQA) in achieving these. This letter replaces the Letter of Expectations (LOE) issued by the previous Minister of Education in May 2021 and should be considered alongside the enduring LOE for Crown entities.¹

In addition to the priorities set out in this letter, NZQA needs to be aware of, and informed by, the Government's key priorities for education, and the Government's guidance and directions to Crown entities.² NZQA also needs to meet All-of-Government expectations or requirements as a minimum but should not be limited by the standards set.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti)

I expect the Board and NZQA to honour and give effect to the Crown's Te Tiriti responsibilities and deliver on Ka Hikitia and Tau Mai Te Reo. Within its role and responsibilities, I expect NZQA to be guided by the Te Arawhiti framework for the public service³ by, for example:

- addressing inequality and being part of a better, more inclusive public service,
- continuing to lift leadership and staff cultural capability and practice in te reo Māori and tikanga to support the Crown to meet public sector objectives for Māori-Crown relationships, and
- ensuring NZQA's quality assurance practices, assessment design and regulatory role reflect the Crown's Te Tiriti responsibilities.

I will look forward to receiving updates about developments in this area in the regular monitoring reports.

Equity and Access

I acknowledge NZQA's strong commitment to achieving equitable outcomes for all learners. I would like to see it continue to improve access to educational pathways and credentials for all learners. In particular, the development of external assessments based on the new standards must have equity and accessibility at the forefront of design. I want NZQA to deliberately focus on Māori students, Pacific students, disabled students and other students

¹ <https://ssc.govt.nz/resources/ending-letter-of-expectations-to-statutory-crown-entities-2019/>

² This includes [Cabinet Office circular CO \(19\) 5: Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi Guidance for policy makers](#), National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) guidance for public sector Chief Executives.

³ [Te Arawhiti - Public sector capability](#)

from socio-economically disadvantaged circumstances. This includes supporting the implementation of Mana Ōrite mō te Mātauranga Māori and Universal Design for Learning principles.

Environmental factors, resilience and future challenges

It is important to me that NZQA is a forward-looking organisation and aware of potential risks and future challenges for the system and Aotearoa New Zealand. As a country we have faced significant adverse events in the past few years, and we have shown resilience and flexibility to continue our mahi and support those most affected.

We will likely face further adverse events in the future, such as pandemics and those events generated by climate change, for example Cyclone Gabrielle, with devastating consequences for learners. There will continue to be new challenges, such as developments in artificial intelligence and technology, the full impact of which is unclear at this stage. As your Minister I expect that NZQA will continue to work with the Ministry and connect in with the wider education sector on the whole system to:

- consider the impacts of any potential future risks and challenges on learners,
- consider the impacts of climate change, specifically in relation to greenhouse gas emissions,
- identify what this might mean for the capability and capacity of the workforce⁴, and
- develop plans to increase resilience and enable support of the sector where needed, particularly for groups of learners who have been under-served.

Key priorities and shifts in the education system

There is much work to do to transform our education system for learners of all ages and I look forward to seeing NZQA's continued commitment to ensure the successful delivery of the Government's ambitious work programme for the education portfolio.

Evolving as a regulator

Underpinning the education work programme is NZQA's core role as a regulator. This means that it is important for NZQA to continue to innovate and evolve its quality assurance framework. This will support its regulatory role in the education system across the compulsory and tertiary sectors, support student wellbeing, and help address the opportunities and challenges I have highlighted in this letter to achieve equitable outcomes for learners. As technology evolves, I also expect NZQA to continue its focus on using data and information collected from across the sector to inform its regulatory practice.

National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Change Programme, Review of Achievement Standards and Digital Assessment

It is important that NZQA continues to collaborate with the Ministry on the implementation of the NCEA Change Programme. This includes the Review of Achievement Standards (RAS) and increasing the engagement of schools and kura with digital assessment.

I would like NZQA to continue recalibrating the quality assurance system for NCEA (including targeted systems for moderation and initiatives to lift sector capability in assessment practice) to ensure it remains fair, valid and nationally consistent. I would like updates in your regular reporting to me on delivery timeframes, and how you are ensuring that your internal and external workforce have the capability and capacity to deliver these changes to the system.

⁴ Refers to both NZQA's staff and the workforce in the education sector

Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE)

NZQA will need to maintain a strong change orientation and be agile and adaptive to ensure delivery of core business-as-usual functions alongside implementing changes it is responsible for in vocational education. This includes supporting the capability build and development skills standards by the Workforce Development Councils, building effective connections with Te Pūkenga, having robust quality assurance processes and establishing a new cost recovery model.

New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF)

I expect NZQA to finalise and implement a new NZQCF that enables qualifications to give greater prominence to transferable skills, further develops the use of micro-credentials and allows the inclusion – where appropriate and over time – of mātauranga Māori in qualifications.

International responsibilities

I expect NZQA to continue to contribute to the success of the International Education Strategy through balancing its support of innovation and its quality assurance function of the education system.

NZQA's ongoing work in qualifications recognition is important to support labour mobility for New Zealanders, Pacific peoples, and migrants. This work enhances the standing of New Zealand's qualifications system nationally and internationally and contributes to the attractiveness of New Zealand as a study destination. Related to this function, I look forward to updates on progress with NZQA's part in the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus initiative.

Operational expectations

Corporate capability and capacity are critical support structures to enable the organisation to deliver change. I would like to see ongoing improvements in the performance and impact measures. I also expect to continue to see progress and updates in the diversity and pay equity work in line with Te Kawa Mataaho guidance and expectations. NZQA is expected to measure and report on reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the Carbon Neutral Government Programme, and I expect to see it taking steps towards achieving carbon neutrality from 2025.

At the governance and leadership level, it is important to me that the Board works effectively and meets the expected behaviours set out by Te Kawa Mataaho. I would like the NZQA Board to assess and review its performance and share its insights with the Ministry. I also expect you to include the deliverables set out in this letter to be reflected in the Chief Executive's performance expectations.

At a wider level, investment in the right systems and tools to enable staff to deliver the work is critical. I understand that NZQA will need to invest in its core infrastructure in the future. This will require careful investment planning and I look forward to seeing regular updates through the reports I receive from you and the monitors.

Finally, I am excited by the opportunity to take on a greater role in the Education portfolio, which is an area that is dear to me. I look forward to being informed regularly of progress against this LOE and receiving assurance that performance and risks are being well managed. I also look forward to the opportunity to working with you, your organisation, and the education sector to create a better future for all learners.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Tinetti', written in a cursive style.

Hon Jan Tinetti

Minister of Education

Cc Dr Grant Klinkum, Chief Executive, New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Cc Andy Jackson, Hautū – Te Pou Kaupapahere, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education