

# Description of the New Zealand Tertiary Education System 2010

This document provides information on the New Zealand tertiary education system for the Tertiary Education Qualification Statement (TEQS), a Diploma Supplement-equivalent.

## Introduction

New Zealand's tertiary education system encompasses all post-secondary school education. The system includes a range of public and private independent, self-governing tertiary education organisations (TEOs) that award tertiary education qualifications. Each type of TEO makes a distinctive contribution to the tertiary education system, as outlined in the Education Act 1989. The Act recognises the strengths and differences of each type of TEO across the whole system.

The tertiary education system reflects Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi as a founding constitutional document of New Zealand. The Treaty is an agreement between the Crown and Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. Course and qualification content, as well as institutions, reflect and address the spirit of partnership embodied in the Treaty.

Degree-level qualifications may be granted by universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs), wānanga (Māori centres of tertiary learning) and some private training establishments (PTEs).

## New Zealand Qualifications Framework

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) is a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand. The qualifications on the Framework can be viewed and compared at [www.nzqf.govt.nz](http://www.nzqf.govt.nz). The Framework has 10 levels. Levels are based on complexity: level 1 is the least complex and level 10 the most.

Level	Naming Sequence
10	Doctorates
9	Masters degrees
8	Postgraduate diplomas and certificates, bachelors degrees with honours
7	Bachelors degrees, graduate diplomas and certificates
6	Diplomas
5	
4	Certificates
3	
2	
1	

## Credits

A total of 120 credits is considered an annual full-time study load for a student. 120 credits is equivalent to 60 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).

## Quality Assurance

There are three organisations that quality assure and approve qualifications in New Zealand:

- *New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee* (NZVCC – also known as Universities New Zealand). NZVCC's Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) approves all university qualifications [www.nzvcc.ac.nz](http://www.nzvcc.ac.nz)
- *Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality* (ITPQ). ITPQ, under delegated authority from NZQA, approves qualifications at level 7 and below for ITPs [www.itpq.ac.nz](http://www.itpq.ac.nz)
- *New Zealand Qualifications Authority* (NZQA). NZQA approves all qualifications delivered by wānanga, PTEs and Other Tertiary Education Providers (OTEPs), and also all degrees above level 7 delivered by ITPs [www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)

All three organisations use the same criteria for approval to ensure that a course is based on clear and consistent aims, content, outcomes and assessment practices, which meet the necessary criteria and requirements. Information on New Zealand's quality assurance processes can be found at:

[www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/quality-assurance-of-education-in-new-zealand](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/quality-assurance-of-education-in-new-zealand)

## Government Agencies

The Ministry of Education [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) is the government department responsible for developing the broad policy framework for tertiary education.

The Tertiary Education Commission [www.tec.govt.nz](http://www.tec.govt.nz) is a Crown agency responsible for leading the government's relationship with the tertiary education sector, and for managing the government's investment in the tertiary education system.

NZQA [www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz) quality assures many tertiary qualifications (as outlined above) and education providers, evaluates overseas qualifications and administers the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. NZQA fulfils the role of National Education Information Centre [www.neic.govt.nz](http://www.neic.govt.nz) under the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997).

## Comparability with Irish National Framework of Qualifications

New Zealand and Ireland undertook a joint project to improve the basis on which the two countries recognise each others' qualifications. The project, undertaken by NZQA and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), compared the two countries' national qualifications frameworks. It was agreed that Irish and New Zealand degree level qualifications were broadly compatible. The full report can be downloaded from [www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz).