



# MAKING CONNECTIONS

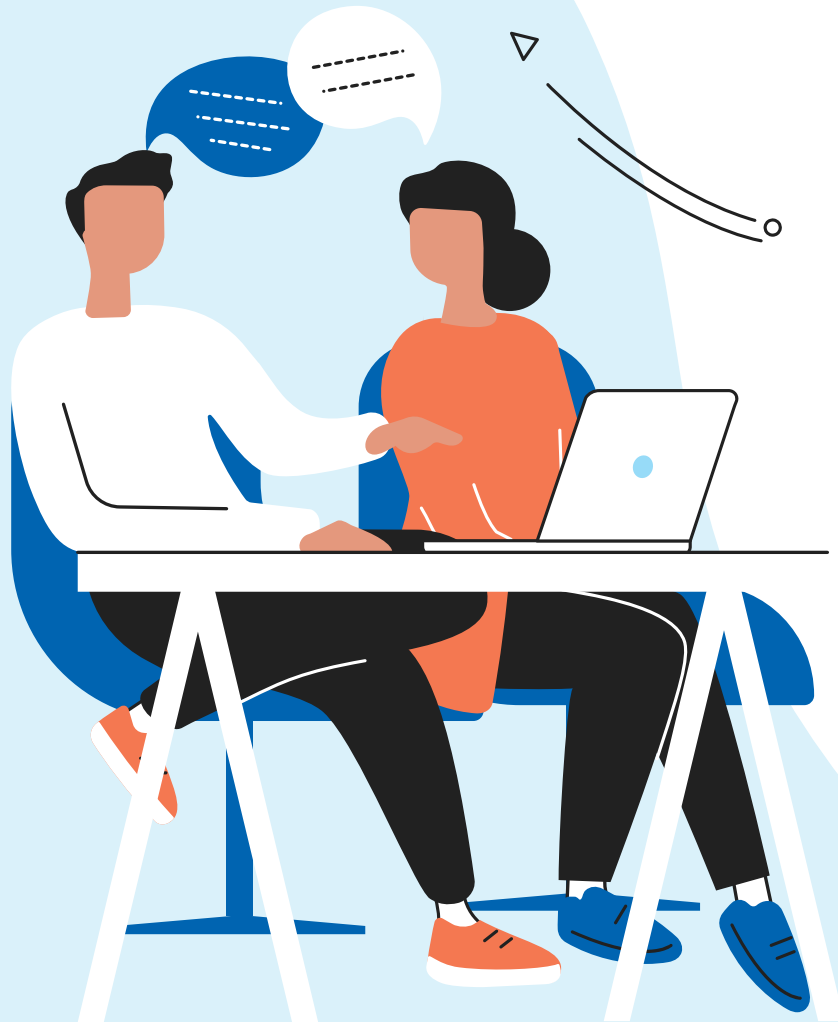
Comparing qualifications in the Philippines and New Zealand



**NZQA**

Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

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# ABOUT THIS JOINT PROJECT

A **Memorandum of Cooperation** was signed between the New Zealand Qualifications Authority / Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa (NZQA) and the Philippines Commission of Higher Education (CHED) in November 2017 to improve the understanding of qualifications and the quality assurance of those qualifications to support better qualification recognition outcomes.

**NZQA and CHED** carried out a comparative contextual analysis of the NZQF and PQF and reviewed specific Bachelor's Degree qualifications using agreed international qualification recognition principles. During this time CHED further strengthened its quality assurance systems to support implementation of the PQF which came into law in 2017 as part of the Philippines education reform.

**This guide** is the result of a joint project by CHED and NZQA to support qualifications recognition between the Philippines and New Zealand.

## NZQA

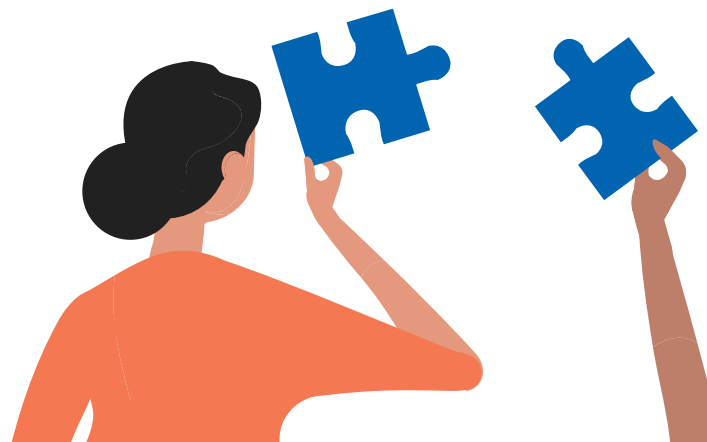
NZQA is responsible for managing the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, administering the secondary school assessment system and the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021, quality-assuring tertiary education organisations (excluding universities), and recognising qualifications.

NZQA hosts New Zealand's National Education Information Centre (NEIC). The NEIC is responsible for providing information and advice about education systems and qualifications in New Zealand and overseas.

## CHED

CHED is responsible for managing higher education in the Philippines. It is responsible for managing and maintaining higher education qualifications in the Philippines Qualifications Framework, governing processes for quality assuring the design and award of nationally recognised qualifications on the national qualifications framework and ensuring these processes are implemented.

CHED is also responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications through issuance of a certificate of equivalency for degrees obtained abroad.



# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

## This guide compares Bachelor's Degree qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) and the Philippines Qualifications Framework (PQF)

The aim of this guide is to enable understanding of Bachelor's Degrees qualifications in both New Zealand and the Philippines by drawing broad comparisons between these qualifications and where they sit on each country's national qualifications frameworks.

The guide is the result of a joint project in 2017-2021 between the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Philippines Commission on Higher Education (CHED)<sup>1</sup>.

The project analysed the characteristics of a Bachelor's Degree to be listed on each of the NZQF and PQF to identify areas of comparability and understand where significant differences exist. Through undertaking this comparison, the NZQA and CHED joint working group were able to reach agreement on the comparability of quality assured Bachelor's Degrees listed on NZQF and PQF.

It is intended that the information from this project be used as:

- a resource to inform policy decision making for future education and training cooperation and engagement.
- a source of information to support transparent and consistent decisions on qualifications recognition.

The information in this guide does not entitle qualification holders from one country to claim automatic recognition in the other.

This guide can be used by:

- Employers and job seekers, to better understand how quality assured qualifications in one country compare to the other.
- Higher education providers and admissions staff, to support the learning pathway for students between New Zealand and the Philippines.



<sup>1</sup> NB: This user-guide was developed based on the analysis conducted during the period of 2017-2021. All references, terminologies and images used are point-in-time at that time.

# SUMMARY OF PROJECT FINDINGS

## Project outcomes

The key outcome from this project is a comparative analysis of New Zealand and the Philippines Bachelor's Degree qualifications.

The project found that New Zealand Bachelor's Degrees, and some Philippines Bachelor's Degrees<sup>2</sup> can be considered comparable.

## Based on documents reviewed by CHED and NZQA, the Philippines Bachelor's Degrees that can be considered comparable are those:

- awarded in or after 2022 listed on the Philippines Qualifications Register (PhQuaR) with the following information:
  - PQF qualification with CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) or Board Resolution or Commission en Banc Resolution, with a date of authorisation
  - PQF Level 6 (VI)
  - Authority Granting Agency: CHED

## The Philippines Bachelor's Degree programme<sup>3</sup> must be:

- delivered by an autonomous or deregulated HEI, or
- delivered by a CHED designated Centre of Excellence or Centre of Development, or
- accredited as Level 2, 3 or 4 by a CHED recognised Accreditation Agency at the time of study.

## Qualification Search:

New Zealand Bachelor's Degrees can be found by searching the NZQCF (Qualification Type: Degree, Level: Level 7, Status: All) <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqf/search/results.do?q=&area=&-searchSubject=All&type=Degree&lvl=7&credit=&status=All>

Philippine qualifications at the bachelor's degrees level may be accessed through the Philippines Qualifications Register by searching Level VI qualification <https://pqf.gov.ph/PhQuaR/Details/7>

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<sup>2</sup> There may be additional requirements for some professional registration occupations and further study. This needs to be confirmed with the relevant regulatory bodies and education providers in the Philippines and New Zealand.

<sup>3</sup> These are delivered by Private Higher Education Institutions, State Universities and Colleges, and Local Universities and Colleges

# USING NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS TO SUPPORT MOBILITY

A National Qualifications Framework clarifies and maps qualifications and their levels in a specific country. The framework shows the hierarchy of qualifications, the links between them and pathways for learners.

National Qualifications Framework can be used as a translation tool to compare qualifications in one country with those in other countries.

NZQA and CHED compared specific Bachelor's Degrees listed on their respective country's National Qualifications Framework.

## The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) is the definitive source for accurate information about all quality-assured qualifications in New Zealand.

The NZQF provides information about the knowledge, skills and attributes the holder of a qualification can be expected to have. It is designed to optimise the recognition of educational achievement and to enhance confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications.<sup>4</sup>

For more information about the NZQF, please visit [www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)

## The Philippines Qualifications Framework

The Philippines Qualifications Framework (PQF) is a quality assured national system for the development, recognition and award of vocational and higher education qualifications administered by the National Coordinating Council (NCC), the PQF's governing body. NCC coordinates collaboration across five sector governing agencies.<sup>5</sup>

For more information about the PQF system, please visit <https://pqf.gov.ph/>

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<sup>4</sup> In 2022 credentials were added to the NZQF to make it the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF). This change does not impact the findings of this project.

<sup>5</sup> As of December 2023, the PQF diagram is being revised to include senior high school qualifications.

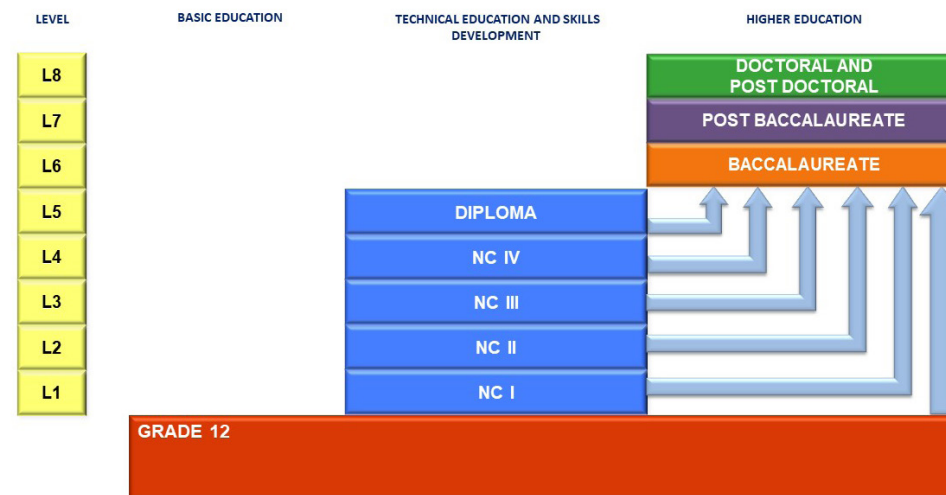
## The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES
10	Doctoral Degree
9	Master's Degree
8	Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Bachelor Honours Degree
7	Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates
6	Diplomas
5	
4	
3	Certificates
2	
1	

## The Philippines Qualifications Framework

as per PQF-NCC Resolution No. 2014-03 adopted on December 11, 2014

### PH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK



# INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

Qualifications of a specific type, for example Bachelor's Degrees, can differ from country to country, and comparing them involves looking at a range of criteria. For this comparability study we:

- agreed a set of internationally defined criteria to identify similarities and differences between the countries' education and qualification systems;
- used the National Qualifications Frameworks of New Zealand and the Philippines to do a level-to-level comparison of qualifications on each framework at a point in time;
- consulted with stakeholders to ensure that the process was robust and transparent; and
- engaged independent international technical referencing experts to ensure that the report is clear, accurate and meets international standards for level-to-level comparisons.

The analysis was completed for the following qualifications:

**NZQF: Level 7: Bachelor's Degree**

**PQF: Level 6: Bachelor's Degree**

## Comparative analysis using internationally defined principles

CHED and NZQA's comparative analysis showed some differences between the two education systems. CHED and NZQA consider that these differences are not substantial:

- The Philippines is undergoing major education reforms:
  - schooling changed from 10 to 12 years with the first group of students graduating from senior high school in 2018.
  - The PQF was established in 2012 with CHED starting implementation in 2017. The NZQF was first developed in 1991 as one of the first qualifications frameworks in the world.



- The qualifications frameworks are structured differently.
  - The NZQF has ten levels. The PQF has eight levels.
  - Bachelor's Degree is located on level 7 of the NZQF and level 6 of the PQF.
- New Zealand has compulsory qualifications listing and programme approval requirements. Philippines higher education qualifications must meet CHED Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSG) for the qualification to be PQF approved and listed on the PhQuaR.

Comparing the two systems enabled NZQA and CHED to identify common elements between the two systems and develop confidence and trust in each other's systems.

NZQA and CHED are confident that:

- The roles and responsibilities of NZQA and the corresponding authorities for the Philippines are clear and transparent.
- The NZQF and PQF are based on learning outcomes.
- There are clear and transparent policies and processes for the inclusion of qualifications on the NZQF and PQF.
- In both New Zealand and the Philippines, the award of Bachelor's Degree qualifications is underpinned by robust quality assurance systems and processes. New Zealand's quality assurance framework is well established. CHED is implementing initiatives for strengthening a culture of quality assurance in Philippines higher education.

## **Lisbon and Tokyo Conventions**

The purpose of these Conventions is to support access to fair and transparent recognition of an individual's overseas qualification.

New Zealand is a signatory to the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Convention) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (Tokyo Convention).

CHED is a signatory to the 1983 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific. It is currently processing its ratification of the Tokyo Convention.

# A COMPARISON OF BACHELOR'S DEGREES

## Qualification structure

Bachelor's Degrees in New Zealand require three years subject specific study. In the Philippines, Bachelor's Degrees have an additional fourth year of compulsory study. There is a separate General Education programme to supplement a curriculum that is focused on the specialist needs of industry and the professions.

New Zealand's integrated education system means that Bachelor's Degree students do not require a fourth year of general education.

Both country's qualifications integrate study and its practical application in a variety of ways including practicum, field study or projects. These may either be integrated into the programme or completed as practical experience after study. There are similar levels of complexity in learning activities to build knowledge and capabilities.

## Entry requirements for university

Entrance to university for both New Zealand and the Philippines is typically gained through the final year senior secondary school qualification at the required level of achievement for university

entrance. Students can also enrol in a Bachelor's Degree programme with an acceptable vocational qualification that is appropriate to the specific area of study.

## Progression

In both countries, a person who holds a Bachelor's Degree is eligible to enrol in a post-graduate programme.

New Zealand Bachelor's Degree graduates can apply for registration with the relevant professional body, provided they meet the registration criteria.

In general, Philippines' Bachelor's Degree graduates are eligible to sit the licensure examination of the applicable profession. They must pass the examination to practice the profession in the Philippines. Licensure does not give automatic registration in New Zealand.

## Credits

All New Zealand qualifications are assigned a credit value which relates to the amount of learning in the qualification. One credit is the equivalent of ten notional learning hours. The qualification definition

in New Zealand specifies the number of credits at each level of the Framework.

In the Philippines, credit value varies depending on context, such as the nature of the programme or its delivery mechanisms. The number of credit units for Bachelor's Degrees do not relate to notional learning hours and do not necessarily encompass different aspects of study such as practicum.

One credit unit is equivalent to seventeen (17) contact or teaching hours per term.

## Credit Requirements

**NZQF:** A Bachelor's Degree requires a minimum of 360 credits. Some Bachelor's Degrees, particularly in professional fields such as engineering, health sciences, and law, include additional credits and may require a longer period of study.

**PQF:** The minimum number of credit units for a Bachelor's Degree ranges from 105 to 192 credit units and up to 205 to 259 credit units for Bachelor's Degrees in professional areas such as architecture, veterinary medicine, and dentistry, which require a longer period of study.

# QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

Both countries assure the quality of their qualifications through a qualification authority that has regulatory responsibilities. There are some differences in these quality assurance systems.



**Qualifications on the NZQF or PQF are quality assured by the country's qualification authority.**



Philippines' higher education qualifications must have final approval/sign-off by the Commission en Banc to be registered as a PQF qualification and registered on PhQuaR.

Bachelor's Degrees started to be approved as PQF qualifications in/after 2017.



All qualifications on the NZQF must meet the NZQF listing requirements.

Qualifications are listed on the NZQF, which was first developed in 1991 and became a single unified framework on 1 July 2010.

**Quality assurance in New Zealand**

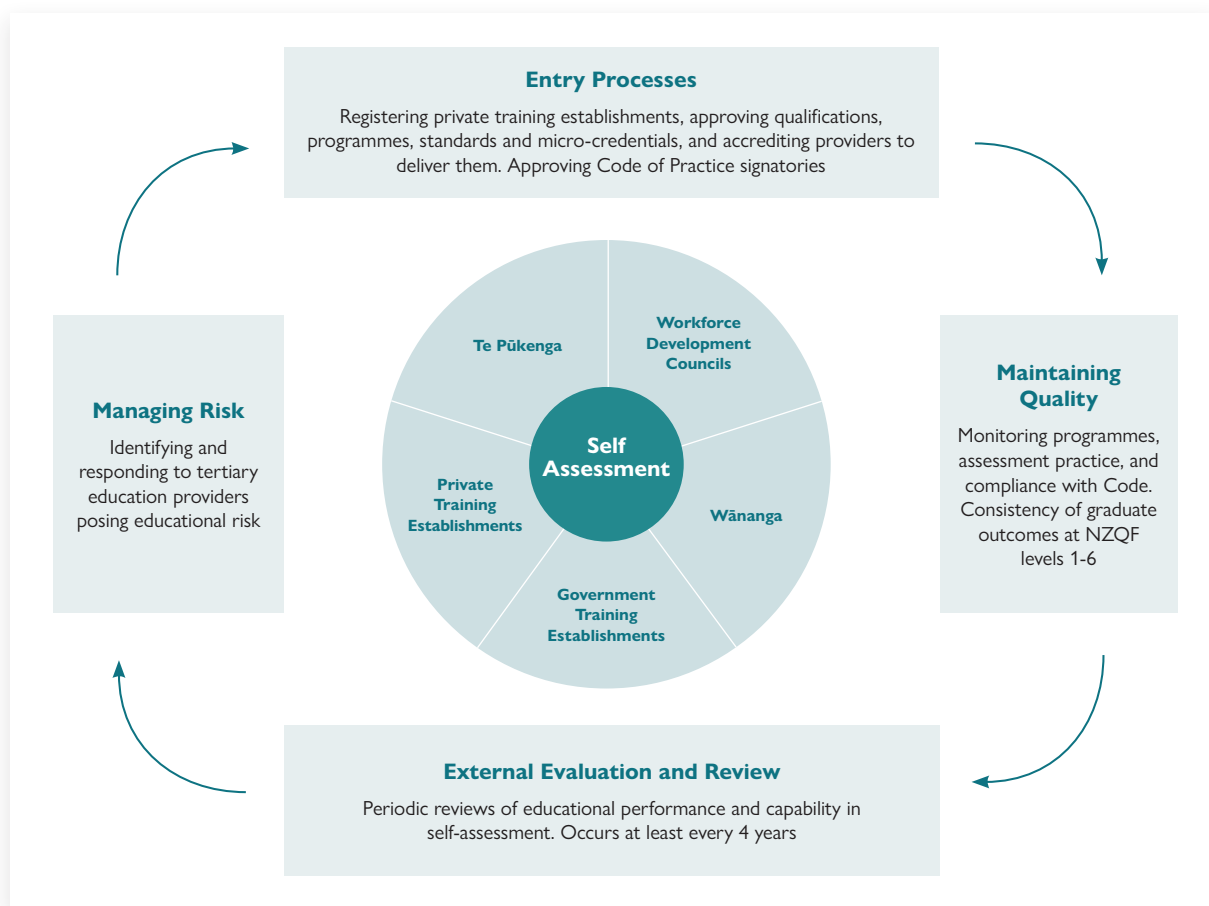
New Zealand has robust, integrated quality assurance systems to give the public confidence in the qualifications awarded and the education organisations that award them.

There are two quality assurance agencies in New Zealand. NZQA is responsible for the quality assurance of qualifications and the education organisations (excluding universities) that deliver them. NZQA sets the rules to list all qualifications on the NZQF, and the quality assurance of the tertiary education organisations (excluding universities) that provide them. NZQA operates an integrated evaluative quality assurance framework.

Universities New Zealand – Te Pūkai Tara, under the overarching rules set by NZQA, quality assures qualifications and the universities that award them.

The processes of Academic Audit (universities) and External Evaluation and Review (non-university TEOs) assure quality in the university and other tertiary education organisations respectively.

## NZQA's integrated Evaluative Quality Assurance Framework



## Quality assurance in the Philippines

The Philippines higher education reforms started in 2012 and are in the final stages of implementation.

CHED's quality assurance system was established earlier but further strengthened when the PQF came into law in 2017.

### 1) CHED has in place:

- quality assurance processes for PQF qualifications listed on the PhQuaR
- quality standards for higher education programs and institutions
- quality assurance through the mandatory grant of government authorization for all programs
- systems for quality assurance of programme delivery.

CHED's current focus is on helping higher education institutions uplift the quality of their performance.

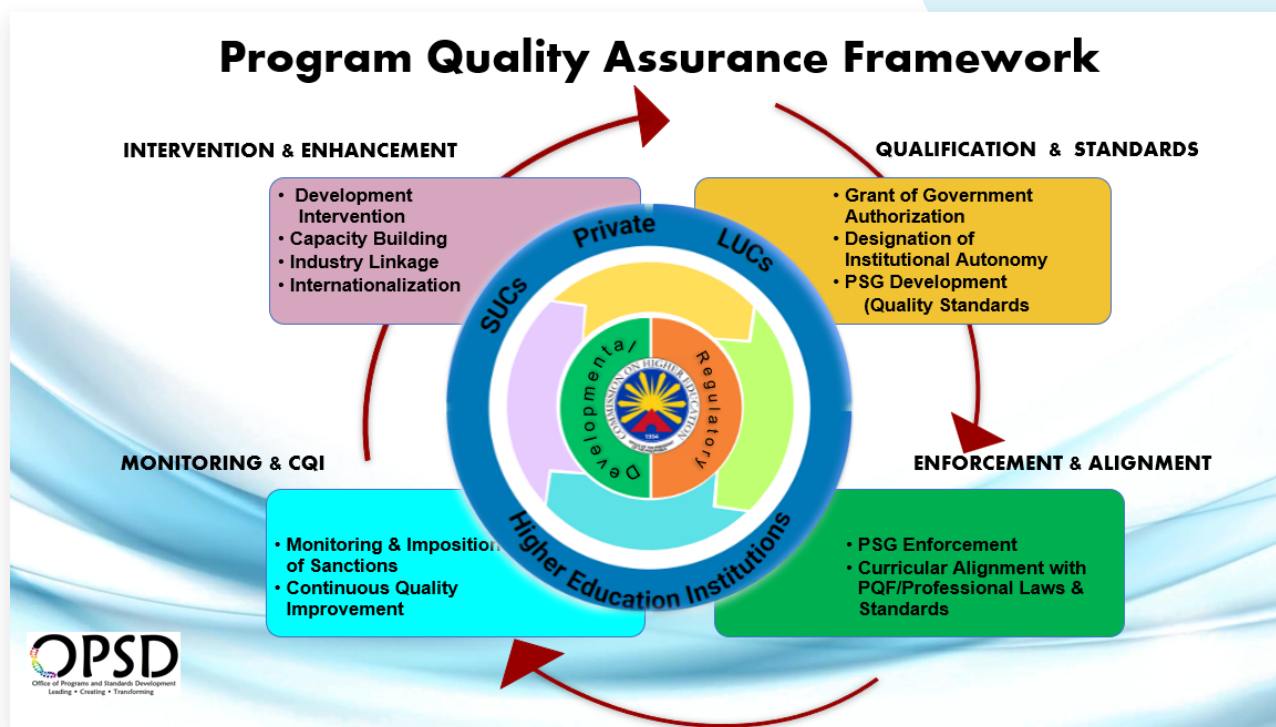
**2) CHED delegates to certain high performing higher education institutions the responsibility to self-assess their quality standards.**

Generally, there is trust and confidence in the standards of those institutions CHED grants autonomous and deregulated status to, and in specific programmes designated as Centres of Excellence (CoE) and Centres of Development (CoD).

**3) Other quality assurance is voluntary.**

Higher education institutions can choose to have programme or institution accreditation by private Accreditation Agencies recognised by CHED.

**Program Quality Assurance Framework**



**Accreditation Agencies** follow the guidelines and standards set by their agency federation or network and recognised by CHED.

A programme or an institution can progressively move up the levels of accreditation over the time periods shown below.

Candidate	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
2 years	3 years	3-5 years	5 years	5 years

**Programme Accreditation means that the institution has consistently delivered the programme above minimum standard for a number of years:**

**Candidate status:**

above minimum standard for 2 years

**Level I status:**

above minimum standard for 3 years

**Level II status:**

above minimum standard for 3-5 years

**Level III status:**

above minimum standard for 5 years

**Level IV status** is a very high-quality programme or institution and can only be reached after 13 years.



# PROJECT OUTCOMES

A summary of agreed outcomes following the analysis of selected Bachelor's Degrees quality assured by NZQA and CHED are as follows:

	New Zealand	Philippines
Relevant agencies responsible for this project	NZQA is responsible for the NZQF. NZQA sets the overarching statutory Rules for the quality assurance of qualifications and the tertiary education organisations that provide them.	CHED is one of the three education sector governing agencies with responsibility for quality assurance. CHED has responsibility over higher education. It governs the processes for higher education qualification design and award and implements quality assurance for the PQF.  The PQF governing body is the National Coordinating Council (NCC), which coordinates collaboration across five sector governing agencies (including CHED) which administer the PQF.
National Qualification Frameworks	The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>was developed in 1991</li> <li>became a single unified framework in 2010</li> <li>has ten levels including school qualifications at secondary level</li> <li>defines qualification types and assigns them to specific levels</li> <li>acts as a register of all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand</li> <li>is based on learning outcomes.</li> </ul>	Philippines Qualifications Framework (PQF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is a national system for the development, recognition and award of qualifications established in 2012</li> <li>began to be implemented in higher education in 2017. It has eight levels and does not include school qualifications defines qualification types and assigns them to specific levels</li> <li>is based on learning outcomes</li> <li>PQF qualifications are listed on the Philippines Qualifications Register (PhQuaR).</li> </ul>
Quality assurance systems	NZQA and Universities New Zealand – Te Pūkai Tara apply the overarching rules set by NZQA for the quality assurance of qualifications and the tertiary education organisations that develop and deliver them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CHED implements regulatory quality assurance mechanisms at the program and institutional levels through mandatory grant of government authorization.</li> <li>CHED's Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) for higher education qualifications set requirements to meet PQF learning-outcomes. CHED has reviewed alignment of current qualifications with the PQF through revision of its PSGs.</li> <li>Institutions can volunteer to use other quality assurance mechanisms implemented by private accrediting bodies.</li> </ul>
Bachelor's Degree	Entry requires the final year senior secondary school qualification at the required level of achievement for university entrance. Graduates are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be able to operate with a degree of independence in a professional context</li> <li>have technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more fields of work or study</li> <li>analyse and generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems.</li> </ul> A person who holds a Bachelor's Degree is eligible to enrol in a post-graduate programme.	Entry requires the final year senior secondary school qualification at the required level of achievement for university entrance. Graduates are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be able to operate with a degree of independence in a professional context</li> <li>have broad and coherent knowledge in a field of work or study.</li> </ul> A person who holds a Bachelor's Degree is eligible to enrol in a post-graduate programme. CHED's qualification PSGs reflect the strong market influence in Philippines' education.



**NZQA**

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