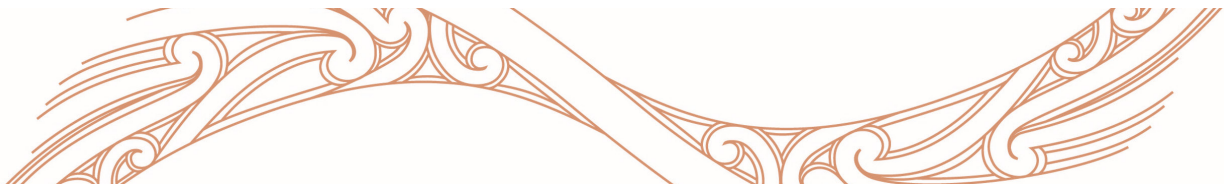




Te Taura Here Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications & Credentials Framework

The New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework





Version 1
1 July 2025



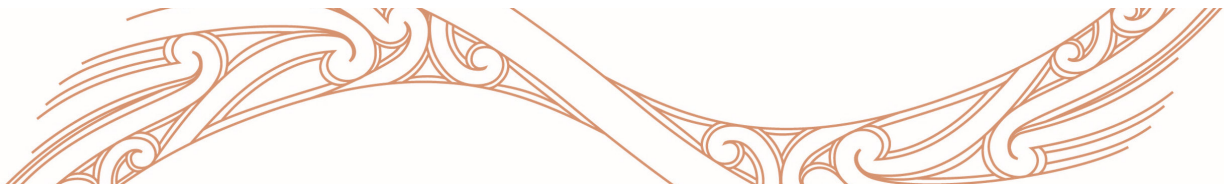
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Foreword | He kupu whakataki

Tuia i runga, tuia i raro, tuia i roto, tuia i waho, tuia te muka herenga tangata.

Tihei mauri ora.

E ngā ringa whatu, e ngā ringa whero o mua kua takoto ki te takapau o mate, nāu te taukaea i renarena ai hei oranga mō te iwi, haere atu rā koutou ki te rangi whakamoeaiki.

He wāhi anō tō Te Taura Here Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa ki tō te Aotearoa angitū, ā pāpori nei, ā ahurea nei, ā ohanga nei hoki.

Ka whakatakatū ngā tohu moroiti o Aotearoa i ngā ākonga kia kuhu atu hei kirirarau mō te anamata o Aotearoa, o te ao whānui anō hoki.

Karanga te rā, karanga te rā!

Come together from all spaces and directions to be joined in unity and humanity.

We acknowledge the departed who put in place the many mechanisms that support our people. Take your rest.

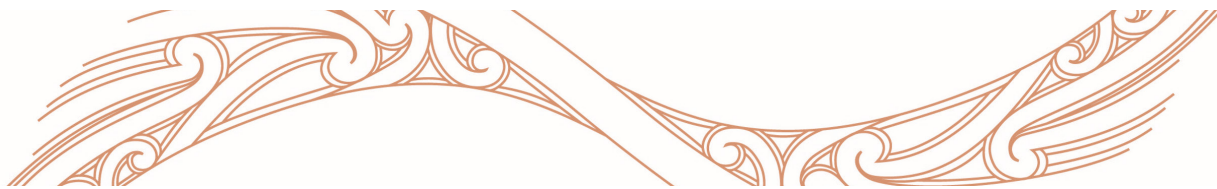
The New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework contributes to New Zealand's social, cultural and economic success.

New Zealand credentials prepare learners to be citizens for the future in New Zealand and globally.

In 1991, New Zealand was one of the first countries in the world to establish a national qualifications framework as an important step towards a unified qualifications system. Following further refinements to the qualifications system, the framework developed into the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) in 2010 and the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) in 2022.

The NZQCF is mandated through the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act). It includes all approved qualifications and micro-credentials and the rules relating to the framework.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority | Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa is responsible for maintaining this framework under Section 433 of the Act.



Purpose of the document | Te pūtake o te tuhinga

This document outlines the key features of the NZQCF and the qualifications and credentials listed on it. It is used by stakeholders – particularly qualification and credential developers – as they design, develop and review qualifications and credentials.

Development of the NZQCF | Te whanaketanga o te NZQCF

The core architecture of the NZQCF is unchanged from the previous New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), ensuring it fulfils its primary function as the definitive source of accurate information about all quality assured qualifications and credentials.

At its core, the NZQCF is a hierarchy of levels of knowledge and skills that describe what graduates know and can do, along with the characteristics of learning at each level.

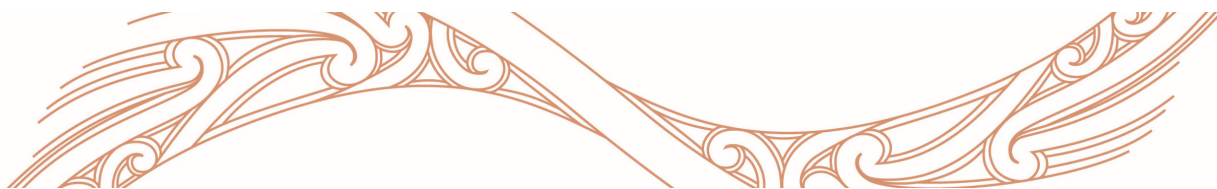
An historic strength of the NZQCF has been to include academic, vocational and senior secondary school qualifications in a single framework. The Framework also includes micro-credentials, allowing a wider range of valuable learning to be captured and recognised. The visual representation of the framework shows all qualifications and credentials across the spectrum.

The level descriptors have been revised in response to stakeholder expectations for greater visibility of vocational skills and knowledge along with key transferable skills. The transferable competencies of critical thinking, communication and collaboration are included as sub-domains.

The qualification type descriptions have been updated and align with the outcomes of the revised level descriptors.

Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), te ao Māori (Māori worldview) and te reo Māori (Māori language) is valued and can be included in qualifications and credentials listed on the NZQCF. Qualifications and credentials can be listed in te reo Māori and English.

New Zealand also has a special relationship with the Pacific region and is home to significant numbers of Pacific people. The NZQCF accommodates the listing of qualifications and credentials that recognise the importance of Pacific knowledges, cultures, and languages.



Section 1: The New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework | Te Wāhanga 1: Te Taura Here Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa

Qualifications frameworks | Ngā anga o ngā tohu

Qualifications frameworks provide a transparent way for qualifications to be recognised and validated. This enables mobility for people both within and across countries.

A framework provides confidence in the credibility and robustness of the qualifications system, and a basis for its evolution. It can be used to progress economic, social, and cultural goals. It can also support career development and progression by setting out the relationships and pathways between qualifications and employment. In a mature qualifications system, both formal and informal learning can be recognised for credit by reference to the framework.

Frameworks articulate the development of skills, knowledge, and the context in which they are applied along a continuum of agreed levels.

The New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework | Te Taura Here Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa

The New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) is one cornerstone of the education system contributing to New Zealand's economic, social, and cultural success as a society. The Framework includes qualifications and credentials that meet the needs of employers, industries, professional bodies, iwi, communities, and learners.

The NZQCF enables qualifications and credentials to be developed, categorised and quality assured. It is based on outcomes that are described in terms of knowledge, skills, and their context.

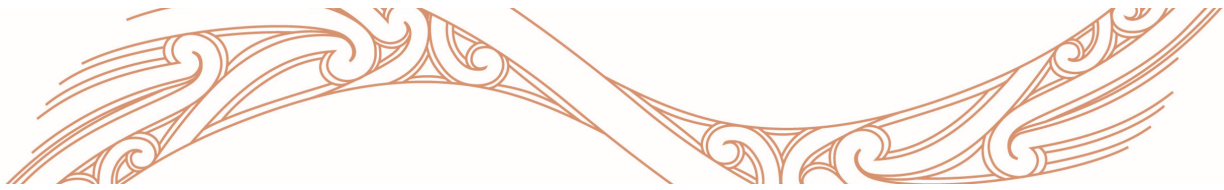
It is the definitive source for accurate information about all quality assured qualifications and credentials in New Zealand. This includes senior secondary school and tertiary education. It provides information about the knowledge and experience the holder of a qualification or credential can be expected to have, and the further education or employment opportunities to which it leads.

In New Zealand's national framework, mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) is valued as a knowledge system alongside other bodies of knowledge, contributing to the advancement of mātauranga Māori across the education system. It is recognised that kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of mātauranga Māori is the domain of Māori, whānau, hapū and iwi (Māori familial structures).

Purpose of the NZQCF | Te pūtake o te NZQCF

The NZQCF:

- Conveys the skills, knowledge, and attributes a graduate has gained through completing a qualification or credential.
- Enables and supports the provision of high-quality education pathways contributing to lifelong learning for all learners.
- Enables the incorporation of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), te ao Māori (Māori worldview) and te reo Māori (Māori language) in qualifications and credentials.
- Enables success to be recognised for all learners in education.
- Enables the development of qualifications and credentials that meet the needs of individuals, groups, industry, whānau, hapū and iwi and communities.



- Enhances confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications and credentials.

Architecture of the NZQCF | Te hanganga o te NZQCF

The architecture of the NZQCF includes core design elements that enable qualifications and credentials to be compared and validated within and across frameworks and jurisdictions. These design elements include:

- a visual representation of the Framework (see next page)
- credit value
- level descriptors (see Section 2)
- qualification-type and micro-credential descriptions (see Section 3).

Qualification and credential developers and quality assurers use these elements in combination to determine the type, level and size of a qualification or credential.

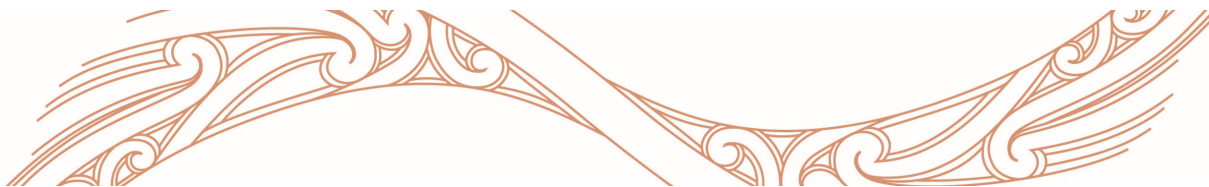
Credit value | Ngā whiwhinga

All qualifications and credentials on the NZQCF have a credit value. The credit value relates to the notional amount of learning involved.

In determining the notional amount of learning, the developer estimates how long it would typically take a person to achieve the stated outcomes in the context specified and to demonstrate that achievement through assessment.

One credit represents ten notional hours of learning and assessment. Notional hours are the amount of time a learner will typically spend studying, including all planned learning activities leading towards the achievement of the standard, programme or qualification learning outcomes.

A full-time learner can usually complete 120 credits of learning in a year of study, typically requiring 1,200 hours of learning.

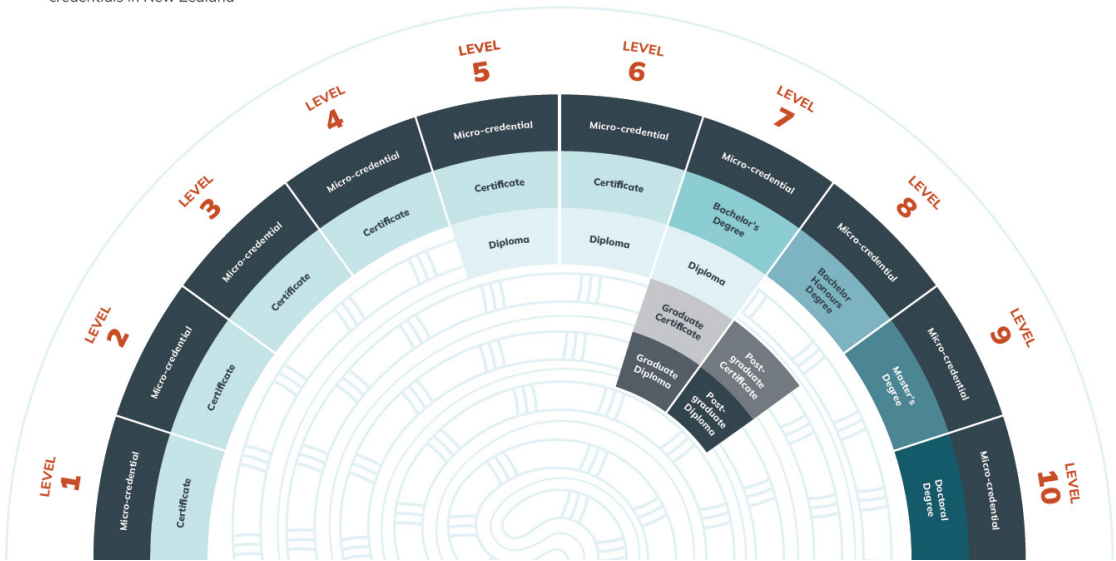


Visual representation of the NZQCF | Te whakaahuahanga o te NZQCF

The following diagram shows the levels and the types of qualifications and credentials that make up the NZQCF.

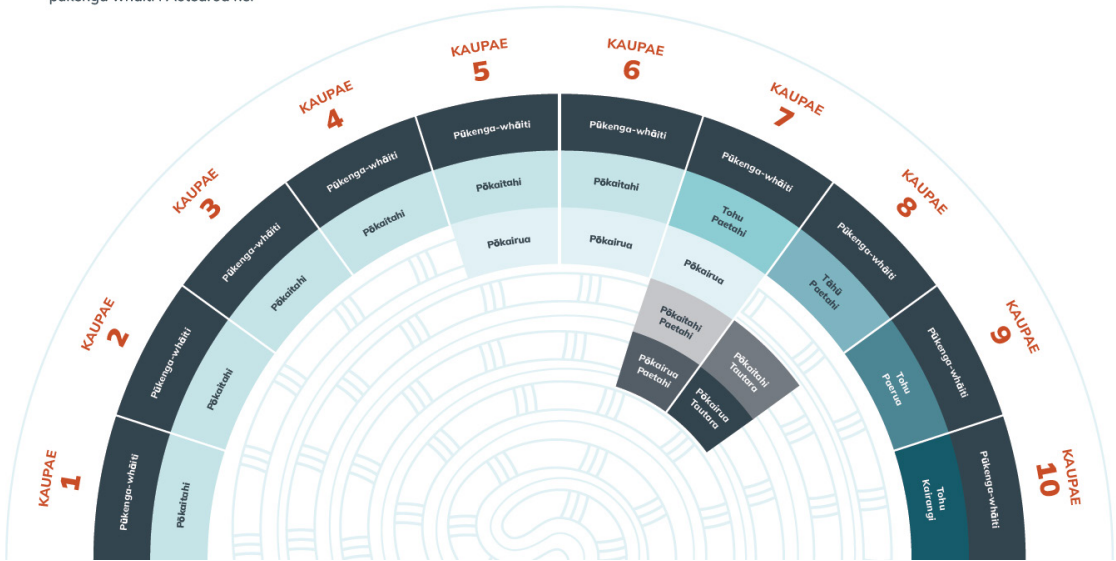
The New Zealand
Qualifications and
Credentials Framework

The NZQCF gives learners, education providers and employers a frame of reference for qualifications and credentials in New Zealand

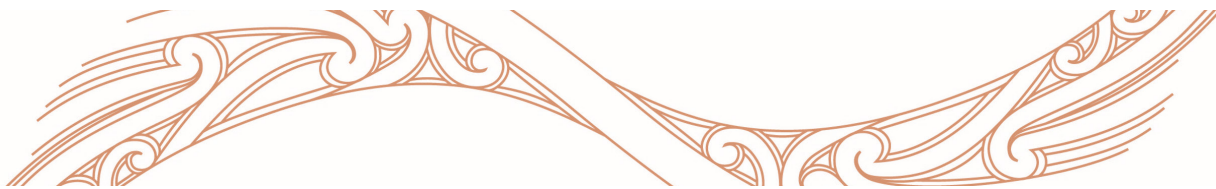


Te Taura Here
Tohu Mātauranga
o Aotearoa

Ko tā te NZQCF, he tuku ki ngā ākonga me ngā kaiwhakarato mātauranga he tirohanga mārama ki ngā tohu me ngā pūkenga whāiti i Aotearoa nei



The graphic used in the NZQCF visualisation is called 'te orokohanga mai o te whakaaro', which is translated as 'the origins of thought'. This design speaks to the process of how knowledge is acquired, how it is used and how it is passed through the generations.



Characteristics of qualifications and credentials included on the NZQCF | Ngā āhuatanga o ngā tohu me ngā whakaūnga mātauranga whāiti e whai wāhi ana ki te NZQCF

Needs-based | Te hāngai ki ngā hiahia

The usefulness, relevance and value of qualifications and credentials is based on their relevance to industry, Māori and iwi, the community, and the skill needs and aspirations of individuals and groups of learners. Qualification and credential pathways show how continued learning has been designed to contribute to growing and developing people's capabilities.

Qualifications may explicitly acknowledge the environmental, cultural, and social aspirations of Māori, Pacific people, disabled people and other communities.

Focused on outcomes | Te arotahi ki ngā putanga

Clearly specifying the outcomes of a qualification or credential enables comparisons with other qualifications and credentials (both nationally and internationally) and assists portability.

Outcomes describe what people know, can do, and the context in which they can operate on completion of their qualification or credential. They include transferable skills. They also indicate pathways to further education, employment and/or contribution to the community.

Flexibility | Te pīngoretanga

Qualifications and credentials can be achieved through a range of pathways and learning modes. Learning can be delivered and assessed in ways that meet the cultural and learning needs of learners and take place in a wide variety of locations. These include on-campus, online, in workplaces, marae, events, churches, sports clubs and organisations, community settings, sites of cultural significance and the kāinga (home).

Learning acquired both formally and informally – such as through recognition of prior learning – may be credentialed.

Trust and accountability | Te pono me te papanga

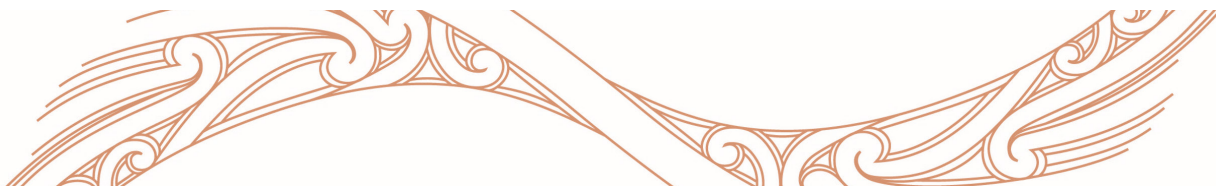
Qualifications and credentials are developed collaboratively with a wide range of relevant stakeholders in an environment of mutual trust, benefit, and accountability. The relationships between these parties are based on whanaungatanga (relationship), manaakitanga (support) and mahi tahi (cooperation), and reflect respect, understanding, communication and collaboration. Parties can rely on the integrity of the processes used and the information provided.

Requirements for qualifications and credentials listed on the NZQCF | Ngā here o ngā tohu me ngā whakaūnga mātauranga whāiti kua rārangi mai ki te NZQCF

There are specific requirements for listing a qualification or credential on the NZQCF which support the transparency of the qualifications system and enable portability and recognition of qualifications and credentials.

The following information covers the key features for all qualifications and credentials listed on the NZQCF:

- title, type and level
- purpose statement
- outcome statement
- credit value



- subject
- status
- review date
- award details.

Title, type and level | Te ingoa, te momo, me te kaupae

Qualifications listed on the NZQCF have a title where the generic stem of the title begins with the qualification type and is completed by a designator, which identifies its main discipline or subject field, and the level. The title may include other qualifiers, such as optional discipline and focus qualifiers.

Micro-credentials listed on the NZQCF have a title which identifies it as a micro-credential and identifies its main subject or content and level.

Purpose statement | Te tauākī o te pūtake

A purpose statement clearly states the qualification or credential's use and relevance to learners, industry and the communities. The statement should also acknowledge the cultural and social aspirations of Māori, Pacific people and other communities, where these are reflected in the need for the qualification or credential.

Outcome statements | Ngā tauākī putanga

All qualifications and credentials listed on the NZQCF contain outcome statements which describe the knowledge and skills of a graduate and the context in which they will be applied. As different learners will achieve the outcomes in different ways, outcome statements indicate the minimum achievement expected.

Each outcome statement includes:

- Graduate profile that describes what a person awarded the qualification or credential knows, is able to do, and the context in which they can operate.
- Education pathways that identify other qualifications or credentials a graduate could enrol into after completing this qualification or credential. Where qualifications or credentials are standalone, and do not prepare graduates for further study, the outcome statement should make this clear.
- Employment pathways or contributions to the community that identify the areas in which a graduate may be qualified to work, or the contribution they may make to their community.

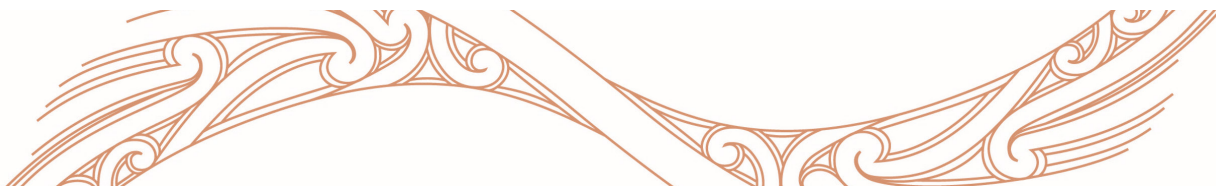
Credit value | Ngā whiwhinga

All qualifications and credentials on the NZQCF have a credit value. The credit value relates to the amount of learning involved and meets the minimum credit requirements for the qualification type. One credit represents ten notional learning hours.

Subject area classifications | Ngā whakatōpūtanga o ngā wāhanga ako

All qualifications and credentials on the NZQCF are assigned a six-digit code from the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) classification system. The NZSCED classifies a qualification into a subject area, which can be used when searching for qualifications in an area of interest.

Information about the NZSCED classification system is available from the Ministry of Education website at www.education.govt.nz.



Status | Te rerenga

All qualifications and credentials listed on the NZQCF must display and maintain clear information on the status using the following definitions:

Current

Qualifications and credentials that are current are those which are listed on the NZQCF and can be offered by education organisations.

Expiring

Qualifications and credentials which are expiring are those which are either being replaced with a new qualification or credential or the decision has been made for them to be discontinued. This will normally be as a result of a review.

The qualification or credential may continue to be available to existing individuals while they complete their programme, but no new learners are able to enrol. Current candidates will need to complete the qualification or credential before the expiry date.

Discontinued

Qualifications and credentials designated as discontinued will no longer be available or awarded.

Review of qualifications and credentials | Te arotakenga o ngā tohu me ngā whakaūnga mātauranga whāiti

All qualifications and credentials on the NZQCF are reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain useful and relevant, and continue to meet the needs of the learners, industries and stakeholders for who they were initially developed.

A review provides an opportunity for the developer and relevant stakeholders to reassess the need for the qualification or credential, to determine whether it is still fit-for-purpose.

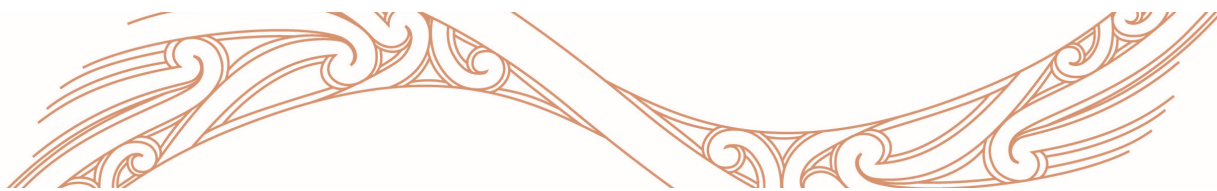
A qualification review must be completed within five years of either listing the qualification on the NZQCF or of the previous review. To be confident micro-credentials remain relevant and current, they are required to be reviewed more frequently than qualifications. A micro-credential review must be completed within three years of either listing the micro-credential on the NZQCF or of the previous review. Factors to be considered in determining the review period include the rate of change in the discipline, industry or sector and the size of the qualification or credential.

Award of the qualification | Te whakawhiwhinga o te tohu

Qualifications and credentials are normally awarded by the education organisation where the learner achieved the award. An exception is the National Certificates of Education Achievement, where NZQA awards the qualifications.

Relationship with assessment and skill standards | Te hononga i waenga i ngā paerewa aromatawai me ngā paerewa pūkenga

An assessment or skill standard is a recognised component of learning that can be included in a qualification or micro-credential listed on the NZQCF. Standards are listed on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards but are not in themselves part of the architecture of the NZQCF.



Section 2: Level descriptors | Te Wāhanga 2: Ngā whakamārama ā-kaupae

The level descriptors broadly define what a graduate is expected to know and be able to do, and the context in which a graduate can operate, as a result of the learning associated with the qualification or credential awarded. The level descriptors apply across any context in which learning, assessment or aromatawai (a teaching, learning and assessment approach underpinned by mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge)) leading to a qualification or credential takes place.

The level descriptors include three domains—knowledge, skills and context. All qualification frameworks use similar domains.

The number of levels in qualifications frameworks varies across jurisdictions, with 8 or 10 levels common. The levels are based on complexity with level one the least complex. The NZQCF has 10 levels.

The sub-domains of knowledge, practice and performance, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, environment, and autonomy and responsibility are embedded within the level descriptors to ensure consistency of what graduates are expected to know, what graduates are expected to be able to do, and where and how graduates can apply their learning.

Level descriptors | Ngā whakamārama ā-kaupae

Level descriptors specify the outcomes to be achieved for each domain, sub-domain, and level of the Framework. The outcomes increase in complexity across the levels from one to ten. The descriptors are shown in the table on page 14.

Knowledge – What graduates know | Te mātauranga – Ngā mea e mōhiotia ana e te ihuputa

Knowledge is defined as what a graduate knows and understands within a body of knowledge. The knowledge domain includes facts, information, concepts and principles relating to a discipline, field of work or study, or professional practice, and may include mātauranga Māori.

It is described as a progression from 'basic or factual' knowledge through to 'operational', 'theoretical', 'technical', 'specialised' and 'frontier' knowledge. Complexity of knowledge is described together with breadth and/or depth of understanding in the field of study or work.

Skills – What graduates can do | Ngā pūkenga – Ngā mahi ka taea e te ihuputa

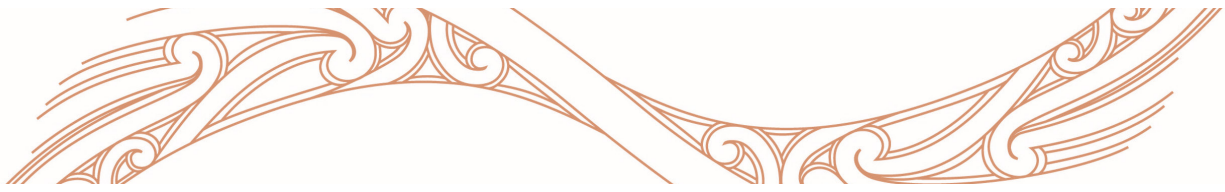
Skills are the ability to complete an action well through deliberate and sustained training or practice. This domain has four sub-domains:

Practice and performance refers to completing, adapting, researching or creating activities, practices, systems and processes.

Critical thinking refers to examining, questioning, evaluating and challenging assumptions to address problems, issues or challenges, or achieve a goal.

Collaboration refers to working with others towards a common goal.

Communication refers to giving information for a range of purposes to a variety of audiences and receiving information to gain understanding.



Context – where and how graduates operate | Te whakapapa – ngā wāhi me ngā ara e mahi ai ngā ihuputa

The context domain describes levels of autonomy and responsibility, and the environment in which graduates are able to apply their knowledge and skills. The levels progress from operating in structured, more predictable environments to more dynamic, increasingly complex and ambiguous environments.

The context also includes expectations for:

- learning or working with or without supervision
- being responsible for self and others
- understanding the scope and limitations of the person's practice.

Level Descriptors Table | Te Tūtohi o ngā Whakamārama ā-Kaupae

The level descriptors broadly define what a graduate is expected know and be able to do, and the context in which a graduate can operate, as a result of the learning associated with the qualification or credential awarded. This may include mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori perspectives.

Domain	Sub-domain	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6	LEVEL 7	LEVEL 8	LEVEL 9	LEVEL 10
What graduates know <i>Knowledge Te mātauranga</i>	Knowledge	Has knowledge of some facts and information relevant to a field of study	Has knowledge of some facts and information and understands some concepts relevant to a field of work or study	Has knowledge of some of the key facts and information in a field of work or study and understands the underpinning concepts	Has knowledge of the key facts and information in a field of work or study and understands the underpinning concepts and key principles	Has in-depth technical or theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study and understands the underpinning concepts and key principles	Has specialised technical or theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study and understands the underpinning concepts and key principles	Has a broad knowledge of a range of technical or theoretical concepts and systematic understanding of an area of professional practice or body of knowledge	Has advanced, specialised, technical or theoretical knowledge and understanding of an area of professional practice or discipline	Has highly advanced, specialised, technical or theoretical knowledge and understanding, some of which is at the forefront of an area of professional practice or discipline	Has expert understanding at forefront of an area of professional practice or discipline and generates new knowledge in a specialist field
What graduates can do <i>Skills Ngā pūkenga</i>	Practice and performance	Performs simple activities	Performs a range of familiar activities	Performs some unfamiliar activities	Performs moderately complex or unfamiliar activities	Customises approach for completing moderately complex or unfamiliar activities	Develops new methods for completing moderately complex or unfamiliar activities	Applies highly developed skills and specialised methods to perform complex activities	Applies advanced skills and specialised methods to perform and adapt complex activities or engage in research	Applies expert skills and methods to create new activities in an area of professional practice or to conduct critical, systematic research	Designs and conducts or supervises substantial research that drives innovation at the forefront of an area of professional practice or discipline
	Critical thinking	Identifies simple problems or goals	Identifies simple problems or goals and recommends a solution or plan	Examines familiar problems or goals and recommends a solution or plan	Examines unfamiliar problems and recommends a solution or plan	Applies problem-solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems	Adapts problem solving techniques to generate solutions for moderately complex problems	Examines an area of professional practice or body of knowledge and generates solutions for complex problems	Evaluates emerging complex problems in an area of professional practice or body of knowledge and generates and evaluates solutions using sound judgement and integrity	Conducts rigorous intellectual analysis of theories, concepts and issues in an area of professional practice or body of knowledge and demonstrates well-developed judgement and integrity to solve complex unpredictable problems	Investigates a body of knowledge or area of professional practice and demonstrates authoritative judgement through original research that challenges established knowledge and practice
	Collaboration	Contributes to group or team activities	Contributes to group or team activities and acknowledges views and experience of others	Makes a significant contribution to group or team activities and acknowledges views and experience of others	Helps create a collaborative culture within a group or team by role modelling and encourages the contributions of others	Leads the creation of a collaborative group or team culture	Leads a group or team on moderately complex projects and motivates others	Leads or collaborates within a group or team on cross-functional projects and motivates others	Leads or collaborates with groups, teams, or leaders on complex or cross-functional projects and motivates others	Leads or collaborates with groups, teams, or leaders on complex or cross-functional projects and fosters a culture that values and incorporates diverse perspectives and contributions	Leads or collaborates with specialist and non-specialist leaders, peers, groups or organisations, taking account of social, cultural and ethical considerations
	Communication	Communicates basic information	Communicates basic information and shares ideas on familiar topics	Communicates familiar information and shares ideas on some unfamiliar topics	Communicates familiar information and shares ideas on a range of unfamiliar topics	Communicates moderately complex information and shares ideas with a known audience using an appropriate communication medium and method	Communicates moderately complex information and shares ideas with a range of audiences using customised communication media and methods	Communicates complex information and shares insights with a range of audiences using optimised communication media and methods	Communicates complex information and shares insights with specialist and non-specialist audiences using optimised communication media and methods	Communicates highly complex information and shares insights with specialist and non-specialist audiences using a range of media and methods such as a sustained argument, proposition or professional decision	Communicates highly complex information and shares insights with specialist and non-specialist audiences through a wide range of media, methods and contexts, such as publication, critical dialogue, specialist and community forums
Where and how graduates operate <i>Context Te whakapapa</i>	Environment	Highly structured environments	Highly structured environments	Structured environments	Structured environments with some unpredictability	Dynamic environments	Dynamic environments with some ambiguity	Dynamic environments with frequent ambiguity	Dynamic environments with frequent ambiguity and change	Dynamic environments with frequent, emerging issues and change	Dynamic environments with frequent, complex issues and unpredictable or uncertain situations
	Autonomy and responsibility	Works or studies mostly under supervision, with limited responsibility for own learning and performance	Works or studies under some supervision, with some responsibility for own learning and performance	Works or studies mostly autonomously, with responsibility for own learning and performance	Works or studies autonomously, with responsibility for own learning and performance, and some responsibility for others in workplace contexts	Responsible for managing activities and projects and for managing others in workplace contexts	Responsible for leading and managing activities and projects and leading and managing one or more teams in workplace contexts	Responsible for own professional practice and development	Responsible for contributing to the development of a profession or field of study	Some responsibility for leadership within a profession or field of study	Responsible for leading the ongoing development of a profession or field of study or creating substantial organisational or social change



Section 3: Descriptions of micro-credentials and qualification types | Te Wāhanga 3: Ngā whakaahuahanga o ngā pūkenga-whāiti me ngā momo tohu

As qualification developers engage with industry, communities and employers, including whānau, hapū and iwi (Māori familial structures), they may consider if mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) relating to a field of study or specific discipline contributes to the graduate outcomes of the micro-credential or qualification.

Micro-credential | Te pūkenga-whāiti

A micro-credential formally certifies the achievement of a coherent set of learning outcomes. It is specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, iwi, hapū and/or the community. A micro-credential typically has a credit value of 5 to 40 credits. It may be used to form part of a programme leading to a qualification.

Qualification | Te tohu

A qualification formally certifies the achievement of a specified set of learning outcomes to a given standard. A qualification has a minimum of 40 credits and meets the description set out in this section.

The descriptions of each qualification type are set out in the following table.

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 hononga 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 hononga ki ētahi atu tohu
7	Bachelor's Degree He Tohu Paetahi	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. 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. Bachelor's Degrees are taught mainly by people engaged in research.	A minimum of 360 credits at levels 5 to 7, with a minimum of 72 credits at level 7 or above. 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. 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.	Open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements, normally at level 3 on the NZQCF. A programme of study leading to a Bachelor's Degree builds on prior study, work or experience.	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. A person who holds a Bachelor's Degree might be eligible to enrol in a postgraduate qualification.
	Graduate Certificate He Pūkaitahi 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 Pūkairua 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 hononga ki ētahi atu tohu
8	Bachelor Honours Degree He Tāhū Paetahi	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. 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. 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. 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.	A minimum of 120 credits at level 8 or above including a research component of at least 30 credits. 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. In special cases ¹ 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.	A 480-credit (or more) degree is open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements, normally at level 3 on the NZQCF. 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.	A graduate of a Bachelor Honours Degree is able to: 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. Achieved to an appropriate standard, a Bachelor Honours Degree should prepare graduates for admission to further postgraduate study.
	Postgraduate Certificate He Pūkaitahi 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 Pūkairua 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 hononga 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: <i>For a 120-credit Master's Degree:</i> 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. <i>For a 180-credit Master's Degree:</i> 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. 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.	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 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	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 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.

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 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. The body of work that leads to the award of a doctorate will be one or more of the following: <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. 	A Doctoral Degree requires at least 360 credits at level 10. Normally this represents 3 to 4 years of full-time study. Further criteria He paeuru atu anō 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: <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. 	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: <i>Doctor of Philosophy</i> 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. <i>Doctorate in a specified field or discipline - the named doctorate</i> 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 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. An individual for a named doctorate must gain a passing grade in both the coursework and the thesis, which may include creative work. <i>Higher Doctorate</i> 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.	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.

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



Section 4: Stewardship of the NZQCF | Te Wāhanga 4: Te kaitiakitanga o te NZQCF

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is responsible for maintaining the NZQCF and the regulatory environment relating to it. The NZQCF is established under section 436 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

NZQA sets the overarching statutory rules for the quality assurance of qualifications and the education organisations that provide them. New Zealand has two quality assurance agencies with responsibilities for implementing these rules (section 253 the Education and Training Act 2020):

- NZQA maintains and quality assures New Zealand's qualifications system for the non-university education sector.
- Universities New Zealand maintains and quality assures the qualifications system for the university sector.

Ongoing development of the NZQCF | Te whanaketanga auroa o te NZQCF

Since a qualifications framework was first introduced in New Zealand in 1991, it has continued to evolve. The framework, and its elements, are periodically reviewed to ensure it remains current, useful and fit for purpose.

A review of the framework, or any element of it, is a collaborative process to ensure it meets the needs of the wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the qualifications system.

Relationship between the NZQCF and other tertiary education settings | Te hononga i waenga i te NZQCF me ētahi atu whare mātauranga tuatoru

The NZQCF is foundational to an integrated tertiary education system. While the Framework lists approved qualifications and credentials, quality assurance of education organisations confirms that stakeholders can have confidence in the qualifications and credentials held by individuals.

Subject to government policy and settings, tertiary funding subsidies are only available for qualifications and micro-credentials that are quality assured and listed on the NZQCF. Student loans and allowances, and student and graduate visas for international students, are only granted on the basis of study towards and achievement of qualifications listed on the NZQCF.

Regulatory environment | Te ao waehere

This document outlines the general features for designing, developing, listing and maintaining a qualification on the NZQCF. These features are specified in the *Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules*.

Further information to support the development of qualifications is included in the related guidance. For NZQA this is published on its website. For Universities New Zealand, this is the *Committee on University Academic Programmes Handbook*.