Australian Units of Competency on the National Qualifications Framework

Guidelines and Criteria for Standard Setting Bodies

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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Australian Units of Competency on the National Qualifications Framework - Guidelines and Criteria for Standard Setting Bodies

Introduction

These guidelines and criteria have been developed to assist Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs)[1] to use Australian units of competency in the setting of national skill standards and the development of training resources for their industries.

Part One of the *Guidelines and Criteria* covers the different ways that Australian units of competency may be used by SSBs in New Zealand.

Part Two sets out the evaluation criteria for the registration of Australian units of competency on the National Qualifications Framework[2].

Background

The guidelines and criteria are designed to support the objectives of the Ministerial Declaration of Confidence: the 'Mutual Recognition of Vocational Education and Training Qualifications between Australia and New Zealand', which came into effect on 1 January 2000.

The Ministers declared 'full confidence in the validity of the quality assurance and other processes underpinning the vocational education and training (VET) qualifications of both countries' (see appendix 1).

The mutual recognition of Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications between Australia and New Zealand is designed to:

> …encourage industry and training providers to work together, and to reduce duplication, thereby advancing a Trans-Tasman VET training market. It will also assist to demonstrate the benefits of Australia/New Zealand VET qualifications to other countries. Further, mutual recognition of VET qualifications will support the working of a single Trans-Tasman labour market.[3]

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[1] *Standard Setting Bodies* include Industry Training Organisations, NZQA - National Qualifications Services, and NZQA - Māori Qualifications Services.
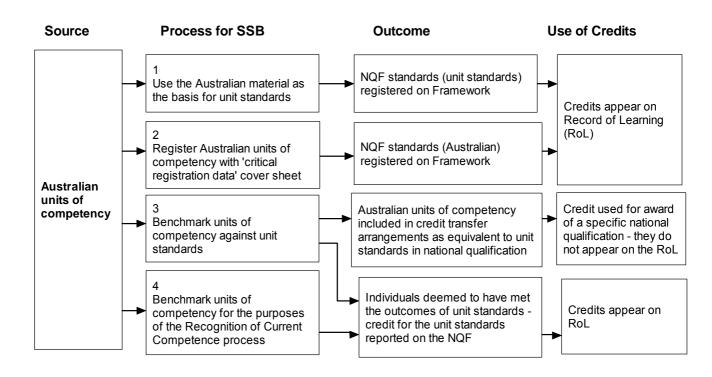[2] Compliance with these criteria is part of meeting the requirements of section 1.2.2 of the *QA Standard for ITOs* - see Appendix 3.
[3] *Mutual Recognition of Vocational Education and Training Qualifications between Australia and New Zealand.* A full copy of the document is available at http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/publications/6220tref.pdf

Part One
Guidelines for using Australian Units of Competency in relation to the NQF

There are four ways in which Australian units of competency may be used by SSBs in relation to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Source	Process for SSB	Outcome	Use of Credits
Australian units of competency	1 Use the Australian material as the basis for unit standards	NQF standards (unit standards) registered on Framework	Credits appear on Record of Learning (RoL)
	2 Register Australian units of competency with 'critical registration data' cover sheet	NQF standards (Australian) registered on Framework	
	3 Benchmark units of competency against unit standards	Australian units of competency included in credit transfer arrangements as equivalent to unit standards in national qualification	Credit used for award of a specific national qualification - they do not appear on the RoL
	4 Benchmark units of competency for the purposes of the Recognition of Current Competence process	Individuals deemed to have met the outcomes of unit standards - credit for the unit standards reported on the NQF	Credits appear on RoL

1   Use the Australian units of competency to develop unit standards

In October 2002 the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) granted copyright clearance for all Australian endorsed units of competency placed on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) 'where these may be useful for New Zealand training and recognition'[4].

Using Australian training material to form the basis of unit standards will be the best option for a SSB to take if the units of competency are not fit for purpose in their entirety eg if only two out of three elements are wanted or required. Units of competency that have been superseded may also be used to form the basis of new unit standards.

If the units of competency are used as the basis for writing unit standards, an acknowledgement statement is included in the special notes.

For example

> The [SSB Name] acknowledges the assistance
> provided by the [ITAB/Skills Council Name] in
> permitting unit of competency *code and title* to be
> used as the basis for this unit standard.

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[4] Andre Lewis, Director, ANTA Industry Support, to Karen Van Rooyen, CEO, NZQA (23 October 2002)

2   Register Australian units of competency with 'critical registration data' cover sheets

In October 2002, the Qualifications Authority Board approved a policy for the registration of units of competency on the National Qualifications Framework[5]. The registration criteria for Australian units of competency set out in Part Two of this document are based on the principles and criteria contained in that policy.

The process involves the registration of an NQF 'cover sheet'. The cover sheet contains a hyperlink to the unit of competency on the NTIS website http://www.ntis.gov.au/, and the NQF cover sheet and the unit of competency together comprise the standard.

The SSB submits to Framework Registration the cover sheets and associated documentation. The standard is then evaluated according to the NQF Registration Criteria for Australian Units of Competency.

The standard will be assigned a unique NQF ID at registration and will appear on the NZQA Record of Learning (RoL) when awarded.

The standard can be used to meet the requirements of any NQF qualification where either its NQF ID or its NQF classification (subfield or domain) is specified.

Units of competency once registered on the NQF will be referred to as **standards** (the standard comprises the cover sheet and the Australian unit of competency) or **NQF standards (Australian)** if necessary to avoid confusion with unit standards or achievement standards.

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[5] NZQA Board minutes, 22 October 2002

3   **Benchmark Australian units of competency for Credit Transfer Arrangements within NQF qualifications**

Following consultation in January to March 2004, the Board of the Qualifications Authority approved a change to the *Registration Criteria for National Qualifications Framework Qualifications* to include Australian units of competency in credit transfer arrangements within NQF qualifications.

Section 10 of the registration criteria[6], 'Credit Recognition and Transfer between NQF and Non-NQF Qualifications' was amended to facilitate the use of units of competency.

Units of competency may be specified in a qualification under the heading 'Credit Transfer Arrangements' in order to provide exemptions for candidates who have met Australian training package requirements. These exemptions will then be available to candidates for the purposes of award of the qualification.

The SSB checks that there is a match between the outcomes recognised by units of competency and the unit standards for which an exemption is proposed. The units of competency must be part of a current and endorsed training package on the NTIS.

The SSB submits to Framework Registration the qualification documentation (for a new, reviewed, or revised qualification) and the credit transfer arrangements are then evaluated according to Section 10 of the Registration Criteria for National Qualifications Framework Qualifications.

Once the qualification is registered the exemptions can be used for the purposes of award of the qualification. They are not transferable to other qualifications and will not appear on the RoL.

A checklist for credit transfer arrangements can be downloaded from the NZQA website.

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[6] *Registration Criteria for National Qualifications Framework Qualifications* (Version 2, May 2004).

Example of 'Credit Transfer Arrangements' section in the qualification document:

Credit Transfer Arrangements

Candidates may claim credit exemptions for the purposes of Elective 3 of this qualification, as follows:

Units of competency	Exempt from unit standards
MCMS200A	21501
MCMS201A	21502
MCMC210A	21503
MCMT220A	21504
MCMT221A	21505

A **maximum of XX credits** can be claimed as exemptions.

Exemptions will apply only for the purposes of award of the qualification and will not appear on the Record of Learning.

The exemptions must be applied for on the application form in the Appendix and should be reported as part of the normal reporting of results. Current NZQA credit fees will apply.

4 **Benchmark Australian units of competency for the purposes of the Recognition of Current Competence process**

Recognition of Current Competence (RCC), also known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), acknowledges the skills and knowledge gained from work and experience, or from courses or study undertaken.

Candidates must go through an assessment process to gain credit for unit standards. The RCC process is carried out by registered assessors and accredited providers.

The SSB develops a matrix of Australian units of competency and unit standards that recognise the same outcomes.

The units of competency are used by the SSB to inform the RCC process.

Candidates gain credit for a benchmarked unit standard through RCC.

The benchmarked unit standard appears on the candidate's RoL.

Part Two
NQF Registration Criteria for Australian Units of Competency

> It is the responsibility of the SSB to select appropriate training packages and high quality units of competency that will be acceptable to employers and providers and meet the needs of their industry.

Australian units of competency will be registered on the NQF when they meet the requirements as set out below.

General Evaluation Criteria

Principles
The SSB and NZQA will check to ensure that
- The integrity of similar or comparable unit standards on the NQF will not be compromised
- The industry or sector confirms acceptability of the Australian units of competency and qualifications in New Zealand
- The award of the standards in New Zealand will not compromise their integrity in Australia
- The performances required for credit for the standards in New Zealand are both legal and consistent with the New Zealand performance context.

Critical registration data
The evaluation process will address the critical registration data required for the cover sheet
- Title
- Level
- Credit value
- Purpose statement
- NQF classification (subfield and domain)
- Entry information
- AMAP references
- Special notes
- Planned review date (to populate the 'comments by' date on the cover sheet).

Duplication
The standards must not unnecessarily duplicate existing unit standards.

Australian units of competency will be registered where no equivalent unit standards exist. In all other cases, the application for registration must involve a review of the SSB's existing domains and unit standards.

Language

The language on the cover sheet must be clear; the text of publishable quality; and the documents created according to cover sheet formatting requirements.

The Australian units of competency will be used to inform the evaluation; for assigning level and credit values; for customising the title to provide an indication of context; and for evaluating the special notes required. The units of competency themselves will not be evaluated.

Accreditation and Moderation Requirements

A copy of the agreement (the MoU or other documented evidence) between the SSB and ITAB/Skills Council outlining the agreed quality management arrangements must accompany all applications. The information in this agreement will be used to amend the SSB's existing AMAP, or provide the basis for a new one if necessary.

The AMAP must be modified to include processes that ensure that the performance criteria in the standards are met in the New Zealand context. The accreditation and moderation arrangements will reflect the agreement between SSB and ITAB/Skills Council in terms of the quality management of assessment and accreditation.

SSB involvement in accreditation
- The SSB responsible for the use of the standards in New Zealand must be involved in the accreditation of all providers
- The SSB must consider any special requirements necessary for the quality management of the standards
- Changes to an AMAP may result in additional accreditation requirements for unit standards if Australian units of competency are registered into an existing domain.

SSB involvement in moderation
- The SSB responsible for the use of the standards in New Zealand must be involved in the moderation of all providers
- The moderation requirements as stated in the AMAP will be used for the cover sheet.

Classifications

Domains must be registered on the NQF. If an existing domain is not suitable, an addition or change to the classification system should be considered. See the Application for change to the classification system (SCUNQ) section on the NZQA website.

Titles

The titles must be meaningful, and consistent with the outcomes in the unit of competency. They must:
- Use the format *Verb - Noun - Condition/Context*
- Be consistent with the domain
- Be unique
- Not include options
- Not exceed 100 characters, including punctuation and spaces.

Levels and Credits

The level assigned must accord with the NQF level descriptors.

Credits allocated must be:
- whole numbers within the range 1-120 (inclusive)
- fair in relation to content and aligned with the definition of credit
- consistent with standards of comparable outcomes and similar contexts
- fair in relation to the evidence requirements.

SSBs may submit additional documentation, used to devise level and credit values, to support their allocation and to provide background for the evaluation process. Supporting documentation may include
- Qualification packaging rules and/or other guidance from the training package
- Examples of existing 'nominal funding hours' used in Australia
- Examples of the 'typical length' of a programme leading towards a qualification
- Explanatory material or matrices used in the development process.

Purpose Statements

Purpose statements must summarise and be consistent with the content of the unit of competency. The purpose statement will begin with the following stem:

> This standard comprises this cover sheet and Australian unit of competency ABCD1234A.
>
> People credited with this standard are able to…

Entry Information

Prerequisites and entry requirements, if required, should be consistent with the unit of competency.

Special notes

The full title and code for the unit of competency and hyperlink to NTIS website must be included in the first special note as follows:

> The Australian unit of competency can be accessed from the NTIS web site using this link: *Code Full Title*. It has been registered on New Zealand's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as part of the Mutual Recognition of Vocational Education and Training Qualifications between Australia and New Zealand, and has been endorsed by the [SSB Name].

The second special note must refer to the MoU, for example:

> Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
> An MOU has been established between [SSB Name] and the [ITAB/Skills Council Name]. The MOU outlines moderation in New Zealand, the accreditation of providers in New Zealand, and the provision for participation of the New Zealand industry in the review of this standard. Further information relating to accreditation and moderation of this standard is outlined in AMAP XXXX.

The special notes must be customised to reflect New Zealand contexts and highlight relevant differences in assessment.

This may involve
* relevant acts, codes, or regulations required for the New Zealand context
* requirements for units of competency that are limited to on-job training
* glossary items and equivalent NZ terms and references
* restrictions for units of competency that are limited in application (eg to certain industry sectors
* references (cited as follows: Author, *Title of Book* (Place: Publisher, year), page no(s).)
* essential resources for assessment that need to be accessed from the NTIS website.

The purpose of each special note must be clear.

National qualifications

Units of competency registered on the NQF will be considered of equal status to unit standards in terms of NQF qualifications submitted for registration. Qualifications comprising NQF standards (Australian) will be subject to the *Registration Criteria for National Qualifications Framework Qualifications* (May 2004).

Registered NQF qualifications may therefore comprise:
  ➢ Unit standards
  ➢ Achievement standards
  ➢ NQF standards (Australian).

The SSB responsible for the use of the standards in New Zealand will be involved in the accreditation and moderation of all providers of the qualification(s) (see Accreditation and Moderation Requirements).

The purpose statement of the qualification comprising NQF standards (Australian), should include statements addressing the mutual recognition arrangements, and provide a link to the Australian training package.

Examples

> The qualification includes Australian competency standards that are part of the *MCM04 Competitive Manufacturing* training package.

> This qualification has been registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in line with the objectives of the Ministerial Declaration of Confidence - 'Mutual Recognition of Vocational Education and Training Qualifications between Australia and New Zealand' and has been endorsed by the [SSB Name].

Statements regarding trans-Tasman qualification equivalency should be included in the purpose statement of the qualification where applicable and by agreement between the ITAB/Skills Council and the SSB.

> This qualification and the Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate IV in Hospitality are deemed equivalent for employment purposes in Australia and New Zealand.

If the qualification comprising NQF standards (Australian) also meets the requirements of an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification, the purpose statement should indicate this. Framework Registration will crosscheck the qualification packaging rules in the Australian training package against the NQF qualification requirements.

Example

> The qualification has been designed to meet the requirements
> of the Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate IV in
> Competitive Manufacturing.

The special notes section of the qualification can refer in more detail to any particular requirements in the qualification that need to be met in order to meet both qualifications.

Example

> To meet the requirements of the Certificate IV in Competitive
> Manufacturing candidates must select only standards from the
> Competitive Manufacturing domain to meet the requirements
> of Elective 2.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Mutual recognition of VET qualifications

DECLARATION OF CONFIDENCE

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

At the 14 November 1997 meeting of the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council, the Commonwealth, State and Territory and New Zealand Ministers responsible for vocational education and training declared confidence in the equivalent standing of Australian and New Zealand vocational education and training qualifications.

Ministers declared full confidence in the validity of the quality assurance and other processes underpinning the vocational education and training (VET) qualifications of both countries. This Declaration lays the foundation for mutual recognition of VET qualifications with similar outcomes. The mutual recognition of VET qualifications between Australia and New Zealand will encourage industry and training providers to work together, and to reduce duplication, thereby advancing a Trans-Tasman VET training market. It will also assist to demonstrate the benefits of Australia/New Zealand VET qualifications to other countries. Further, mutual recognition of VET qualifications will support the working of a single Trans-Tasman labour market.

Ministers accordingly declare that mutual recognition of VET qualifications between the countries will be deemed to exist on 1 January 2000. The mutual recognition will apply to VET qualifications from the Australian Qualifications Framework and New Zealand Qualifications Framework only. This will ensure that respective quality assurance requirements have been met.

This mutual recognition of VET qualifications is intended to complement, not replace, existing arrangements in place, for example, by professional associations that already have determined international requirements. It will also complement the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement, signed by the two countries in July 1996, which covers registered occupations. ITABs, ITOs, other national standards-setting organisations and State and Territory Recognition Authorities will have sufficient time to carry out whatever activities they feel necessary to give practical effect to mutual recognition by 1 January 2000. They can, however, give effect to mutual recognition before this date should they wish.

Mutual recognition will be deemed to exist on 1 January 2000 unless ITABs, ITOs, other
national standards-setting organisations and State and Territory Recognition Authorities can demonstrate why it should not. In such circumstances these organisations and authorities will have to demonstrate to the Australian National

Training Framework Committee or the New Zealand Qualifications Authority why this should be postponed and what steps will be taken to achieve mutual recognition. Any such postponement granted will last for a maximum of one year, at which time the exemption will lapse unless a further postponement is granted.

To assist the process, the Australia/New Zealand Joint Council for Co-operation in Vocational Education and Training has developed an information package on both countries' qualifications and competency standards arrangements. The package, together with this Declaration of Confidence, will be distributed to ITOs, ITABs, national standards-setting organisations and State and Territory Recognition Authorities. They will be widely available, including via the Internet, to assist the exchange of information.

A full copy of the document is available at
http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/publications/6220tref.pdf

Appendix 2 – Quality Assurance Standard for Industry Training Organisations

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Section 1.2.2

Development and review of unit standards and national qualifications

The ITO submits national qualifications and unit standards that meet industry needs and are able to be registered on the NQF.

The ITO demonstrates this by

i implementing a process for developing and reviewing Accreditation and Moderation Action Plans (AMAPs), unit standards, and national qualifications that results in standards and qualifications that

- are based on the needs of trainees

- are supported by industry

- meet NZQA registration criteria

- are normally of sufficient quality to be processed without needing further development[7].

The *QA Standard for ITOs* can be found at:
http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/aaa/resources.html

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[7] Typically, an application that requires further development will require the ITO to resume the development process and the application will be subject to several quality assurance cycles.

Appendix 3 – Documentation for registration

Documents required for registration of units of competency on the NQF

Copies of the units of competency in the approved Australian format	☐
A cover sheet for each unit of competency (including a hyperlink to the endorsed Australian unit of competency). See Appendix 5 – Cover Sheet Template	☐
Signed copy of the MoU between SSB and ITAB/Skills Council concerning the use of the standards in New Zealand	☐
Indication of arrangements made to ensure that review of the Australian units of competency is linked to the review of the standards, and will include feedback on their use, in New Zealand	☐
A revised version of the AMAP, or a new AMAP, as required	☐
Prerequisites set out clearly in a diagram (not for publication)	☐
Signed application form and checklist. See Appendix 4 – Application Form and Checklist	☐
Supporting documentation for level and credit allocation, if available	☐

Appendix 4 – Application Form and Checklist

Application Form & Checklist for Registration of Australian Units of Competency on the NQF	
Name of Standard Setting Body	
Contact for this batch	
Position	
Postal address	
Street address	
Telephone Land line: **Mobile:**	
E-mail address:	

Subfield(s):	
Domain(s):	
Number of units of competency submitted for evaluation:	
• **New**	
• **Reviewed**	

(For NZQA use only)

Batch: _____

Signed by Chief Executive/SSB representative   **Date**

_____

 Name:

_____

Please return to:

Framework Registration
New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PO Box 160
WELLINGTON

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

This checklist is to be used in conjunction with Registration Criteria for Australian Units of Competency

Tick box for compliance or include explanatory comment	SSB	NZQA	Comments
The SSB confirms that:			
The integrity of similar or comparable unit standards on the NQF will not be compromised			
The industry or sector confirms acceptability of the units of competency in New Zealand			
The award of units of competency in New Zealand will not compromise their integrity in Australia			
The performances required for credit for the units of competency in New Zealand are both legal and consistent with the New Zealand performance context			
For ITO developers: these units of competency fall within the Gazetted scope of the ITO			
For NZQA developers: these unit standards do not fall within the Gazetted scope of an ITO			
The cover sheets have undergone an edit			
Documents required			
Copies of the units of competency in their approved Australian format			
Covering sheet for each unit of competency			
Signed copy of the MOU between SSB and ITAB/Skills Council concerning the use of the units of competency in New Zealand			
A revised version of the AMAP, or a new AMAP, as required			
AMAP			
The AMAP has been modified to include processes that ensure that the standards in the units of competency are met			
Accreditation requirements have been addressed			
Moderation requirements have been addressed			
General			
Outcomes do not unnecessarily duplicate existing unit standards			
Language on cover sheet is clear, and text is of publishable quality and meets formatting requirements			
Classifications			
Subfields and domains are registered on the Framework			
Titles			
Outcomes are consistent with the title			
Use the format Verb - Noun - Condition/Context, and are consistent with the domain			
Are unique			

Tick box for compliance or include explanatory comment	SSB	NZQA	Comments
Do not include options			
Do not exceed 100 characters including punctuation and spaces			
Level			
The level assigned accords with the level descriptors			
Credits			
Are within the range 1-120 (inclusive)			
Are fair in relation to content and aligned with the definition of credit			
Are consistent with standards of comparable outcomes and similar contexts			
Are fair in relation to the evidence requirements			
Special Notes			
Include full title of the unit of competency and hyperlink to NTIS website			
Are customised to meet New Zealand contexts and highlight relevant differences			
Address all relevant acts, codes, or regulations required for the New Zealand context			
Glossary items and/or NZ terms and references are clearly defined as required			
References are cited as follows: Author, *Title of Book* (Place: Publisher, year), page no(s).			
The purpose of each special note is clear			
Entry Information			
Prerequisites, if required, are consistent with units of competency			
Prerequisites are set out in a diagram (not for publication)			
Purpose Statements			
Summarise and are consistent with content			
Include the approved stem			
Accreditation and Moderation options			
Match statements on AMAP no._____			
Additional Documentation for Reviews			
Hard and electronic copy of a Review Report for NZQA website			
Annotated hard copies of cover sheets showing the changes that have been made			

On behalf of SSB   **On behalf of NZQA**

Checked by _____   **Checked by:** _____

Date checked _____   **Date checked:** _____

Appendix 5 – Cover Sheet Template

NQF ID
DOMAIN
Title

level:

credit:

final date for comment: [planned review date for the unit of competency]

expiry date:

sub-field:

replacement information: [This unit standard replaced unit standard xxxx]

purpose: This standard comprises this cover sheet and Australian unit of competency ABCD1234A.

People credited with this standard are able to:

entry information:

accreditation option:

moderation option:

special notes:
1 The Australian unit of competency can be accessed from the NTIS web site using this link: Code *Full Title*. It has been registered on New Zealand's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as part of the Mutual Recognition of Vocational Education and Training Qualifications between Australia and New Zealand, and has been endorsed by the [SSB Name].

2 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) An MoU has been established between [SSB Name] and the [ITAB/Skills Council Name]. The MoU outlines moderation in New Zealand, the accreditation of providers in New Zealand, and the provision for participation of the New Zealand industry in the review of this standard.

3 Legislation

4 Definitions, etc