



Guidelines for monitoring programmes leading to degrees and related qualifications at levels 7 to 10

NZQA

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New Zealand Qualifications Authority



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1. Introduction

This document provides guidance and support to monitors and education organisations, other than universities, on the requirements for monitoring programmes of study leading to degrees and post-graduate qualifications at levels 7 to 10.

These guidelines set out the New Zealand Qualification Authority's (NZQA) expectations to meet quality standards and comply with NZQA processes. They indicate what actions and information are required from the education organisation.

Changes made since April 2020

In January 2023, the Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2022 were updated in line with amendments to the Education and Training Act 2020 which came into effect on 1 August 2022. As a result, this guide has been updated to remove the annual monitoring of Level 7 diplomas.

Level 7 diplomas will be regulated in the same way as level 1–6 qualifications.

Context

Section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act) gives NZQA the authority to make rules for the quality assurance processes for which it is responsible.

Under section 436 of the Act, qualifications must be listed on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF). The [Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2022](#) govern the listing of qualifications on the NZQCF.

Programme approval and accreditation is required under sections 439 and 441 of the Act. The [Programme Approval, Recognition, and Accreditation Rules 2022](#) govern one of the requirements to participate in monitoring to maintain accreditation to provide an approved programme.

The [Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2022](#) govern programme approval and accreditation requirements for offshore programme delivery.

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance

Programmes approved through Te Hono o te Kahurangi framework will be monitored under the same framework.

Te Hono o te Kahurangi is the name of a unique whare ako framework and methodology used by NZQA to carry out quality assurance in the tertiary sector. The framework recognises ākonga Māori choosing to achieve educational success through mātauranga Māori as relevant to their worldview, context and practices. Six dynamic and interconnected kaupapa are at the heart of Te Hono o te Kahurangi.

- Rangatiratanga: Empowerment – Leadership of self and others
- Manaakitanga: Collaboration – Support and service to others
- Whanaungatanga: Belonging – Relationships are valued
- Kaitiakitanga: Stewardship – Care and responsibility for all learning
- Pūkengatanga: Skills – Skills, knowledge, and abilities
- Te reo Māori and reo tangata: Expression – Diversity in language and culture within

learning is valued.

Tūrangawaewae and ngā tikanga are imbued throughout these six kaupapa.

2. The purpose of monitoring

15.2 To continue to maintain accreditation to provide an approved programme, a New Zealand programme or part of them leading to a degree, graduate or post-graduate qualification at levels 7 to 10 institutions (*other than universities*) must:

- a) ensure the criteria specified within rule 7.1 continue to be met:
- b) undertake self-assessment:
- c) provide the programme (*or part*) as it was approved, including adhering to the programme regulations, unless a specific change has been approved in writing by NZQA:
- d) participate and cooperate in external evaluation and review:
- e) participate and cooperate in monitoring, which will consist of either:
 - i. annual visits to the institution by the NZQA appointed monitor, reports by the monitor on the implementation of the programme, and reviews of the first graduating years of programmes by the institution; or
 - ii. where NZQA permits, self-monitoring in accordance with any conditions imposed by NZQA.

The purpose of monitoring programmes of study that lead to degrees and related qualifications at levels 7-10 is to provide assurance to NZQA and stakeholders that a programme and its delivery consistently meet the criteria for ongoing approval. In this connection, NZQA expects to see evidence of the institution's ongoing engagement with and feedback from iwi and/or hapū.

Monitoring reports must provide evidence that:

- the programme is being managed, planned and delivered as it was approved and accredited
- any recommendations made during the programme approval and accreditation process have been enacted or a rationale provided for not doing so
- any minor modifications and enhancements made by the provider are consistent with the intent of the approved programme and the ongoing development of a quality programme and in line with a type 1 change¹
- there is independent, external academic, industry and Iwi input during reviews and consideration of significant programme enhancements (i.e. type 2 changes)
- NZQA is made aware of issues affecting the satisfactory provision of the programme
- the quantity and quality of staff research outputs are consistent with the ongoing development and maintenance of a research culture supporting the programme discipline
- there is an effective process for monitoring the quality of outcomes for learners and other stakeholders and reviewing programme regulations and content.

Monitoring by NZQA is intended to supplement the actions taken by providers to review and regularly improve the quality of the programmes they are responsible for.

3. The monitoring process

NZQA, in consultation with the tertiary education organisation (TEO), will appoint a monitor who will prepare an annual monitoring report following an on-site or virtual visit to the TEO.

¹ See [guidelines for listing, approval and accreditation of degree programmes and related qualifications](#)

Appointment of monitors

NZQA will appoint monitors with expert knowledge of the discipline area of the programme and experience in academic processes. The standard expectation is that the monitor holds a postgraduate qualification in the discipline of the degree, is research active, and teaches or leads a programme of similar or higher level at an academic provider.

NZQA and the provider may agree to appoint the academic representative from the panel as monitor, or another appropriately qualified candidate may be proposed. The potential monitor cannot be involved with the programme in any of the following ways:

- involvement in the consultation process during the programme development phase
- guest lecturing for the department
- moderating for the provider
- writing course materials
- membership of the programme advisory committee, research and/or ethics committee
- immediate family members employed by the provider
- writing/marking/moderating assessment materials for another TEO, a private business producing assessment materials).

In the mātauranga Māori context, monitors will be fluent in te reo Māori and tikanga Māori protocols and will understand the methodology of Te Hono o Te Kahurangi.

Monitors will:

- have an independent and neutral perspective on the programme and the education organisation
- be appointed by NZQA in consultation with the education organisation
- have an NZQA contract for service, which includes a conflict of interest and a confidentiality clause.

Role of NZQA evaluator

An NZQA evaluator may accompany the monitor for the first monitoring visit. The role of the NZQA evaluator, if accompanying the monitor, is to:

- provide guidance to the monitor in NZQA's expectations and processes
- provide neutral, experienced and, where applicable, culturally robust management of the monitoring visit
- when necessary, provide a link between the programme's approval and/or accreditation

If it is agreed that the NZQA evaluator will not accompany the monitor, they will be available to respond to any questions or concerns before, during, and following the monitor's visit.

NZQA will determine the involvement of the NZQA evaluator on subsequent visits following a discussion with the monitor and the provider. Either NZQA or the provider may request the ongoing participation of the NZQA evaluator.

Monitoring in conjunction with regulatory bodies

Where professional registration is a prerequisite for practising in a particular field or occupation, professional registration bodies will be involved in monitoring the content and quality of the education being delivered.

Written formal agreements between registration bodies and NZQA detail the relevant processes and requirements, including any shared responsibilities for monitoring programmes.

The on-site monitoring process

Organising the visit

NZQA expects monitoring visits to be held at the site for which the programme has been approved. Where a programme has been approved for multiple sites, NZQA and the monitor will determine which site(s) will be visited. Please also refer to the Location of the monitoring visit (below). In exceptional circumstances, a provider may apply to NZQA for consent to conduct the visit online.

The first monitoring visit will typically be made within the first six months of the second year of delivery of the programme and the agreed date will factor in the availability of staff and learners. The visits will take place annually following the initial visit.

The monitor, NZQA evaluator, where relevant, and the provider will determine a mutually agreeable date for the monitoring visit to occur. Dates should be determined at least two months before the visit to allow sufficient time to make arrangements.

If an NZQA evaluator is not involved in the monitoring process on-site, NZQA must be kept informed of the agreed date.

Provider's report format

There is no fixed format for the provider's report. However, at least one month before the visit, the provider is expected to provide the monitor and any accompanying NZQA evaluator with information, including but not limited to:

- the programme document
- enrolment information
- learner retention and achievement
- graduate destination information
- internal and external moderation activities
- feedback from learners, teaching staff and external stakeholders which must include evidence of engagement with iwi and/or hapū
- consultation with external stakeholders
- how the TEO has addressed any recommendations from:
 - the initial evaluation report and/or
 - the most recent monitor's report
 - registration or professional body re-accreditation process (if applicable)
- current resources to maintain delivery of the programme
- consistency of delivery and resources across multiple sites
- changes to the programme and/or its delivery since the last report
- staffing changes since the last report
- staff professional development activities
- research activities of staff
- significant issues and challenges
- collaborative and/or sub-contracting arrangements.

The provider's report must cover all approved sites from which the programme is delivered, including approved offshore delivery sites.

Monitoring of programmes delivered offshore

An offshore programme delivery means, provision in a country other than New Zealand, Cook Islands, Niue, or Tokelau of all or part of the programme that leads to a qualification on the NZQCF, whether physically provided in that country by:

- a) the offshore provider, or
- b) one or more offshore partner organisations; or
- c) the offshore provider together with:
 - i) one or more other offshore providers;
 - ii) one or more offshore partner organisations

Offshore delivery rule 3.1

Online programme delivery to learners outside New Zealand is not classified as 'offshore programme delivery'. However, this delivery is still subjected to NZQA monitoring; therefore, the monitor may ask questions in relation to:

Online delivery for learners located outside New Zealand

- equitable outcomes for onshore and offshore students
- equitable access to academic staff, support services, and programme resources
- management of asynchronous and synchronous delivery and impact on staff workloads
- how the provider ensures consistency and equal learning opportunities
- management of offshore placements, if applicable

Offshore partner organisations

offshore partner organisation means an organisation that is used, or is to be used, by an offshore provider for any of the following activities relating to offshore programme delivery: teaching, training or supervision of learning activities:

- a) assessment:
- b) practical training:
- c) academic or pastoral support

Offshore delivery rule 3.1

Where an offshore partner organisation is involved, the monitor may ask additional questions in relation to:

- assessment and moderation process of the offshore partner
- oversight of the programme delivery by the offshore partner
- participation of the offshore partner in programme reviews
- effectiveness of the collaborative arrangement with the offshore partner

The monitoring process may be extended to meet the requirements of any relevant overseas accreditation body.

Conducting the monitoring process

Monitoring will generally take place over one or two days, depending on the scale of the delivery and will include meetings with:

- senior management
- programme manager(s)
- lecturers/teaching staff
- research staff
- resource managers (e.g. librarians, learner support)
- learners
- external advisory committee members and/or external stakeholders.

If a programme is approved for delivery at more than one site, representatives from those sites should be present in the above meetings as appropriate. Off-site representatives may attend virtually.

Location of monitoring visit

Where a programme is approved for delivery at multiple sites, the monitor and NZQA in consultation with the provider, will determine the site(s) to be visited. The choice of site(s) to visit will be determined by factors including:

- the number of enrolments/or students at a given delivery site
- more recently approved sites with at least a year's delivery of the programme
- identified risk factors at any site
- whether a site has offered a degree programme previously
- the time elapsed since the last monitoring visit to a given site.

Depending on the scale of the programme delivery, the monitor may visit more than one site in a particular year. This could entail a physical visit to one site and a virtual visit to another/others.

Fees

The total cost of the monitoring process, including fees, travel, accommodation, and NZQA costs, is the provider's responsibility.

4. Responsibilities of the monitor, the provider and NZQA

On their appointment by NZQA, monitors are provided with a contract, a conflict-of-interest form, the Guidelines and the monitoring report template.

The monitor is responsible for:

- coordinating the timing of the visit with the provider at least two months before the proposed date
- preparation for the visit, i.e. reading all relevant documentation in advance of the visit
- conducting the monitoring process with the provider
- confirming the agenda with the provider
- completing a draft monitoring report no later than **ten working days** after the visit, in accordance with the guidelines
- sending the draft monitoring report to NZQA

- raising any issues or concerns with NZQA which may have an impact on the monitoring process or outcome.
- recommending the programme be granted self-monitoring status if there have been at least two prior monitoring visits and they believe the programme delivery to be stable, in accordance with NZQA programme approval and accreditation criteria, and of appropriate quality.

The provider is responsible for:

- coordinating, at least two months before, the date of the visit with the monitor
- coordinating any requirements relating to the monitoring visit with the monitor
- providing appropriate documentation to the monitor at least one month before the visit
- confirming or correcting the factual accuracy of the draft monitoring report with the NZQA within **ten working days** of receipt of the report
- raising any issues with NZQA which may have an impact on the monitoring process or outcome.

NZQA is responsible for:

- appointing and contracting monitor(s)
- providing information and support to the monitor
- sending the draft report to the provider
- working with the monitor if the provider requires any amendments to the report
- providing the provider with the final version of the monitoring report
- addressing any issues brought to its attention by the monitor, provider or other relevant parties which may have an impact on the monitoring process and
- granting the provider self-monitoring status for the programme.

5. Following the on-site visit

The main outcome of any monitoring visit is a monitoring report. This is produced by the monitor(s) and considered by NZQA and details the monitor's professional opinion on the quality of the provider's programme delivery.

The monitoring report

The monitoring report will inform NZQA of the outcomes of the monitor's visit. The report will contain evidence and analysis confirming that the programme continues to meet programme approval and accreditation criteria. Monitoring reports must provide evidence that:

- the programme is being managed, planned and implemented as approved.
- consideration has been given to any recommendations made during the programme approval and accreditation process.
- any minor modifications and enhancements made by the TEO are consistent with the intent of the approval and the ongoing development of a quality programme, and
- NZQA is made aware of issues affecting the satisfactory provision of the programme or deviation from the initial approval and accreditation.

The report is based on what is seen and discerned during the visit and on the documents submitted to the monitor before or during the visit.

NZQA will provide the final monitoring report to the provider and the monitor. Where there are concerns about maintaining approval and accreditation, NZQA will require the TEO to submit an action plan to address the areas of concern.

If NZQA continues to have serious or ongoing concerns about the quality and/or stability of a programme or its delivery, it may initiate the procedure to withdraw the provider's accreditation to deliver the programme.

Timelines

The monitor is expected to send the draft monitoring report to degreemonitoring@nzqa.govt.nz within **ten working days** of the visit.

NZQA is expected to send the draft monitoring report to the provider for a factual accuracy check within **ten working days** of receiving the report from the monitor.

The provider is expected to confirm the factual accuracy of the report, or request changes within **ten working days** of receiving the draft report from NZQA.

If there is any request for changes, NZQA will consult with the monitor and inform the provider accordingly.

NZQA is expected to send the final version of the monitoring report back to the provider within ten working days of receiving the checked draft report.

6. Evidence of ongoing review

A provider will submit evidence to the monitor that they are undertaking regular annual reviews of the programme in accordance with Rules 13.2 and 15.2. In addition to their annual review of the programme, the provider will conduct a review of the first graduating year of any programme leading to a degree or post-graduate qualification at levels 7-10 (Rule 15.2(e)(i)). In undertaking a graduating year review, the provider should also review the qualification. Subsequent major reviews of the programme will be conducted on a cyclic basis agreed upon between the provider and NZQA.

The provider should apprise the monitor of the scheduling of any major programme or qualification reviews and incorporate feedback from the annual monitoring visit in these reviews.

Please refer to the Guidelines for Listing, Approval and Accreditation of degree programmes and related qualifications.

7. Special reviews

Under Rule 21 of the Programme Approval, Recognition and Accreditation Rules 2022, NZQA retains the right to undertake a special review of an approved programme and/or its delivery by an accredited provider.

Where concerns are raised with or come to the attention of NZQA about a programme approval, New Zealand programme recognition, or accreditation to provide an approved programme or recognised New Zealand programme, NZQA may undertake (as appropriate) a special review of:

- a) the programme approval (other than a university programme approval):
- b) the New Zealand programme recognition held by a standard-setting body:
- c) the accreditation to provide the programme (other than a university accreditation) or the New Zealand programme.

As a result of any such review, NZQA may bring forward the monitoring visit or address the issues identified on a case-by-case basis.

If NZQA has serious concerns about the delivery of a programme following a special review, it may initiate the procedure to withdraw the provider's accreditation to deliver the programme.

8. Self-monitoring

When is self-monitoring considered?

This occurs when the NZQA monitor considers that a programme has been consistently delivered as approved and accredited by NZQA and that all conditions for changing the provider's monitoring status are met. The earliest this may be considered is after the first cohort has graduated.

TEOs will continue to use an external monitor as part of the self-monitoring process. Where NZQA approves self-monitoring, other registration bodies may continue to monitor the programme.

Self-monitoring involves the provision of an Annual Programme Evaluation Report (APER) to NZQA.

If serious concerns regarding the programme(s) are identified, NZQA may revoke the provider's approval to self-monitor.

Conditions for requesting self-monitoring

Conditions for the transfer to self-monitoring include confirmation from all parties that the provider is managing the programme appropriately and in particular, that:

1. The programme is being implemented as planned and presented at the time of approval, subject to modifications and enhancements broadly consistent with the intent of the programme and the natural evolution of a quality programme.
2. Recommendations made during the programme approval and accreditation and by the monitor have been appropriately addressed.
3. The provider has mechanisms in place at the level to ensure independent, external academic input during reviews and consideration of proposed programme enhancements.
4. NZQA will gain sufficient awareness of any issues with the programme or its delivery from the APER.
5. For a provider to request that NZQA grant self-monitoring status, the monitor must have specifically made a recommendation in the report for self-monitoring.

Request for self-monitoring

TEOs meeting the above conditions must request approval for self-monitoring status by formally writing to NZQA.

TEOs must supply the following documents via the NZQA Portal (select 'other' as the application type):

- A letter from the CE or delegated authority confirming the internal process followed in appointing an external degree monitor, reviewing the programme and qualification, and the process of sending the Annual Programme Evaluation Report (APER) to NZQA by the deadline.

- Copy of the final degree monitoring report, which includes the recommendation from the monitor to change the status to self-monitoring.

NZQA will process the application within 30 working days and email the outcome letter.

There is no fee for this application.

Monitoring by Annual Programme Evaluation Report (APER)

The provider will appoint an external monitor. The external monitor's report should be included and attached to the APER.

An APER includes the following information:

- enrolment information
- sites at which the programme is being offered
- learner retention and achievement
- graduate destination information
- internal and external moderation activities
- consultation with external stakeholders and evidence of engagement with iwi and/or hapū
- feedback from learners, teaching staff and other external stakeholders
- how the provider addressed any recommendations from:
 - the initial evaluation report and/or
 - the most recent monitor's report
 - professional or registration body's re-accreditation process (if applicable)
- changes to the programme and/or its delivery since the last report
- consistency of delivery and resources across multiple sites
- staffing changes since the last report
- current resources to maintain delivery of the programme
- staff professional development activities
- research activities of staff
- significant issues and challenges and proposed actions.

The APER must take account of delivery at all sites.

Report format

The provider is responsible for carrying out a review process each year and sending a copy of the APER to NZQA by **30 June**.

The review will be carried out according to the provider's quality management system.

No specific report format is required.