



**Guidelines for programme approval and accreditation**  
**New Zealand Certificates Levels 1-6**  
**New Zealand Diplomas Levels 5-7**

**NZQA**

Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority



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# 1. Introduction

This document provides guidance and support to education organisations seeking approval for a programme they have designed, and/or accreditation to deliver an approved programme, that leads to a New Zealand Certificate at Levels 1-6 or a New Zealand Diploma at Levels 5-7 on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF).

To gain approval and/or accreditation an application must meet the criteria in the Programme Approval, Recognition, and Accreditation Rules 2022 and demonstrate quality in line with the key evaluation questions in these guidelines.

These guidelines set out the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's expectations for a quality application that meets all criteria. They address and explain each programme approval and programme accreditation criterion and offer guidance on the information and evidence to be included in an application.

Changes made since April 2023

The definitions for Type 1 and Type 2 changes have been revised in order to allow more changes to be submitted to NZQA as notifications. See [Making changes to programmes](#)

## Context

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

Programme approval and accreditation is required under sections 439 and 441 of the Act. The [Programme Approval, Recognition, and Accreditation Rules 2022](#) govern the approval of programmes of study and accreditation for these programmes.

## Related Rules

### ***New Zealand Programmes***

The Programme Approval, Recognition, and Accreditation Rules 2022 also cover recognition of national curriculum as New Zealand Programmes. Guidelines for recognition of New Zealand Programmes are yet to be developed. For more information go to

[Simplifying the design of vocational qualifications](#)

### ***Offshore delivery***

Education organisations planning offshore delivery of an NZQA approved programme must meet the Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2022.

[Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2022](#)

## [Guidelines to the Offshore Delivery Programme Rules](#)

### **Degree and related programmes**

Education organisations planning delivery of programmes leading to degree and related qualifications should refer to the [Guidelines for approving and maintaining degrees and related qualifications](#).

### **Quality assurance**

The decision to approve a programme of study, and/or to accredit an education organisation to deliver a programme, is based on the quality and sufficiency of evidence provided. Evaluation questions enable decisions to be reached on a consistent and reliable basis. See approval key evaluation question (Section 2: [Approval](#)) and accreditation key evaluation question (Section 3: [Accreditation](#)).

In the evaluation process NZQA will be clear about the information and evidence on which decisions have been made. An evaluation outcome of *approved*, *not approved*, or *request for information (RFI)* will be provided based on the overall quality of the application. The intention of an RFI is to address minor gaps in the evidence provided, or to clarify design and/or delivery, and may lead to an approved or not approved outcome.

The application process is detailed in Section 6 [How to apply](#)

### **Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance**

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi is a whare ako framework and methodology NZQA uses for quality assurance in the non-university sector.

If your organisation uses kaupapa Māori and teaches mātauranga Māori, Te Hono o Te Kahurangi lets you engage with NZQA using Māori approaches and values. The framework also contains practices that will add to learner success by assuring national consistency.

To have your application of Māori content evaluated under Te Hono o Te Kahurangi approach, choose **Evaluate under QA Māori** in the application portal.

### **Te Hono o Te Kahurangi guidelines for evaluative quality assurance**

These guidelines inform tertiary education organisations about how NZQA quality assures educational outcomes. They also show how NZQA prioritises mātauranga Māori and the acceleration of Māori learner success in the tertiary education context.

[Guidelines for Te Hono o Te Kahurangi evaluative quality assurance](#)

### **Who can apply for programme approval and accreditation?**

NZQA will accept applications from:

- Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology

- wānanga
- NZQA registered private training establishments
- secondary schools and kura
- government training establishments.

## Secondary schools and kura

Under section 524 of the Education and Training Act 2020, secondary schools and kura are required to apply to NZQA for approval for new classes, courses or programmes where they are intended exclusively or mainly for international students.

### [Course Approval for International Student Classes, Courses or Programmes](#)

It is recommended that secondary schools and kura liaise with a Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) to deliver the TEO's approved programme, except where the school has expertise in developing and writing programmes of study.

For more information schools should contact their School Relationship Manager.

### ***Programmes leading to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)***

Vocational Pathways provide more options for learners to complete NCEA and progress into further learning and work. Together with their NCEA (Level 2), students can achieve a Vocational Pathways Award.

For more information on Vocational Pathways go to the [Youth Guarantee website](#).

TEOs can develop and submit an application to offer learners NCEA (Level 2) aligned with a Vocational Pathway. Application guidance is available on our website:

### [Applying for NCEA Level 2 aligned with a Vocational Pathway](#)

## Work-based training and TITO transitions

As part of the Reform of Vocational Education the role of supporting work-based training arranged by Transitional Industry Training Organisations (TITOs) shifted to Te Pūkenga and other providers selected by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) as receiving organisations.

To facilitate the transfer of training functions and learners, NZQA granted temporary approval to receiving organisations for TITO's programmes of industry training. These programmes were approved as Programmes (Transitional).

These temporary approvals are designed to allow receiving organisations to get up to speed on the delivery of the programmes before deciding on how they would like to manage them in the future.

### ***Changes to Programmes (Transitional)***

Receiving organisations may notify NZQA of changes to Programmes (Transitional) that do not substantively affect the learning outcomes or learner experience (see Making changes to programmes).



## **Replacing Programmes (Transitional)**

Receiving organisations can now apply for permanent approval and accreditation for programmes to replace their Programmes (Transitional). NZQA is working with receiving organisations on the timelines for this to occur.

### **Guidance for work-based training programmes**

Applications for programmes designed to replace Programmes (Transitional) need to show how the learning activities are delivered, training agreements are regulated, and how all accreditation criteria are met, including any sub-contracting arrangements.

An NZQA booklet is available to provide general support and advice to TEOs.

[Work-based training](#)

## **Level 7 Diplomas**

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,

***Qualifications leading to level 7 diplomas (except for any developed by universities) will be reviewed and replaced with New Zealand diplomas:***

- NZQA has updated the Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules to include level 7 diplomas.
- Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) have a function to endorse level 7 diploma programmes. They can also develop New Zealand level 7 diplomas, where they have a clear vocational link to their specified coverage areas.
- NZQA will engage with each provider currently holding approval and accreditation to deliver a level 7 diploma to discuss the review process.
- WDCs will work collaboratively with providers in the review process. For example, when an existing level 7 diploma is reviewed and replaced with a New Zealand diploma, a relevant WDC may become the qualification developer. This could be because the qualification is vocational, and the discipline is under the relevant WDC industry coverage.

***The national consistency of graduate outcomes process will now incorporate level 7 diplomas, including current level 7 diplomas:***

- From late 2024, NZQA will begin to include level 7 diplomas in the schedule of qualifications to undergo consistency review and will allocate a consistency reviewer to each event. NZQA will be in contact with relevant providers before a schedule is produced.

***NZQA will continue risk-based monitoring of level 7 diplomas:***

- Some programmes are currently being monitored or have been scheduled. NZQA will continue engaging with relevant providers regarding the planned

monitoring activities.

Education organisations reviewing an existing programme, or with any questions, please contact NZQA: [level7quals@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:level7quals@nzqa.govt.nz)



## 2. Approval

NZQA evaluates the programme against the criteria in Rule 4 of the Programme Approval, Recognition, and Accreditation Rules 2022 and considers the application using the following key evaluation question:

### **How well does the programme design match the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose?**

To be approved all of the following must apply:

- The programme matches the strategic purpose and requirements of the qualification.
- The programme is made up of learning outcomes structured in a coherent way to achieve the qualification outcomes and address the relevant needs of learners.
- Good evidence the programme is acceptable to the relevant communities and key stakeholders.
- No significant gaps or weaknesses in the application or evidence provided.

If any of the above are not evident the programme will not be approved.

### **Approval Criterion 1: Qualification to which the programme leads**

The programme meets the definition published on the NZQA website of the applicable qualification type listed in the Table in the Appendix to the Qualification and Micro-credential Listing and Operational Rules 2022.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learners who complete the programme achieve an NZQCF qualification.

Each qualification type has an NZQCF definition including its purpose, outcomes, level, and credit requirement at that level.

Qualification definitions, type, level and credit value are set out in the New Zealand Qualifications Framework booklet (which will be updated to refer to the NZQCF).

#### [New Zealand Qualifications Framework](#)

The purpose, outcomes, level, and credits of the programme must align with its NZQCF qualification type definition. In general, the overall level and credit value of the programme must be the same as the qualification (or qualifications) it leads to.

#### **Credits**

One credit is equivalent to 10 notional learning hours. Notional learning hours comprise all planned learning activities leading toward the achievement of programme learning outcomes. See [Approval Criterion 3: Delivery methods](#) for more detail.

Where qualifications include elective and/or optional strands with varying credit values

the programme credit value will reflect the credit value of the strand being awarded. In exceptional cases, where unit standards or achievement standards are the assessment tools, the total assessment credits may marginally exceed the qualification credits.

It is not permissible for the programme credits to be fewer than the qualification credits (including applicable strands).

### **Level of components**

Programmes may contain components that are lower than the level of the qualification (e.g. Level 3 components in a Level 4 qualification) but overall the graduate profile outcomes must be met by programme requirements at the level of the qualification. This includes outcomes within strands. Similarly, the programme may contain components that are higher than the level of the qualification; however, learners should be given appropriate supports to enable them to succeed and to ensure consistency of outcomes.

Note on components that are at a higher or lower level than the qualification:

Qualification level is determined by evaluating the qualification graduate profile against the level descriptors. The graduate profile is viewed holistically, and the notion of best fit is applied in determining the level. In the same way, programme outcomes are viewed holistically against the qualification graduate profile.

### **Approval Criterion 2: Title, aims, learning outcomes and coherence**

The title, aims, stated learning outcomes, and coherence of the whole programme are adequate and appropriate and clearly meet the graduate profile and specification for the qualification as listed on the NZQCF.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learners who complete the programme will achieve the qualification's graduate profile.

#### **Title**

The title of the programme should clearly and accurately reflect the subject area of the programme and the qualification to which it leads.

The programme title can be devised by the applicant, or the qualification title can be used.

Learners who complete the programme will be eligible for the New Zealand Certificate or New Zealand Diploma to which the programme leads. The certificate awarded will refer to the qualification title in full, as it is listed on the NZQCF.

#### [New Zealand Certificate/Diploma Specifications](#)

The qualification title as listed on the NZQCF will also appear on the learner's New Zealand Record of Achievement (NZRoA) if reported to NZQA. Therefore, to avoid

confusion for the learners and other stakeholders, the approved programme title should be either:

- the same as the listed qualification title, or
- omit the words New Zealand Certificate or New Zealand Diploma.

Where this is not possible, or desired, a rationale should be included in the application.

For programmes that lead to more than one qualification a title should be devised by the applicant.

Protected terms<sup>1</sup> must be used as intended.

Apprenticeships leading to New Zealand Certificates may use 'New Zealand Apprenticeship' in the title.

### ***Titles for programmes leading to qualifications with strands***

Programmes leading to the award of a qualification with a strand should include only the title/s of the strand/s the programme will lead to.

For example, a programme leading to the award of the New Zealand Certificate in Intermediate Snowschool Instruction (Applied) (Level 5) with strands in Ski, Snowboard, Telemark, and Cross-country (with optional strand in Business Development) via its Ski strand and with an optional strand in Business Development, could be titled:

- New Zealand Certificate in Intermediate Snowschool Instruction (Applied) (Level 5) (Ski) (Business Development) or
- Certificate in Applied Ski Instruction and Business Development (Level 5)

### ***Aims***

An aim statement should inform learners and other stakeholders of the programme's purpose and the qualification to which it leads. The aim statement should reflect the programme's unique aspects, the specific identified needs of learners and/or target learner group.

Consider, for example:

- the programme's use and relevance to learners, industry and communities
- the programme's aim in terms of the cultural and social aspirations of Māori, Pacific and other communities
- information relevant to the programme's key stakeholders
- information that is aligned with the strategic purpose statement of the

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<sup>1</sup> Organisational and qualifications titles that cannot be used without authority: including university, polytechnic, institute of technology, college of education; degree, Bachelor, Master, Doctor or postgraduate, and granting awards containing the words, "National/New Zealand".

qualification

- teaching and learning philosophy, strand, context, site of learning (e.g. workplace)
- pre-requisites, if designed as part of a qualification pathway / learner journey.

### **Components**

Components of learning make up a programme. They include courses, modules, papers, projects and work integrated learning. The content of each component is set out in a descriptor, e.g. a course outline in student information.

Each component descriptor needs to include:

- title
- component aim
- level
- credits
- learning outcomes
- content summary and sequence
- learning activities (type, mode and mix)
- assessment methodology and a brief description of the assessment.

Consider including in the component descriptor (where relevant):

- sequence of the component in the programme
- detailed information about the assessment methods
- readings and resources
- expected use of communication channels, e.g. for assessment dates.

### **Learning outcomes**

Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, understanding and application a learner will achieve through each component of the programme of study.

Learning outcomes provide a basis for the design of learning activities and assessment.

The application must show how the programme outcomes and the component learning outcomes map to the qualification's graduate profiles (GPOs) with an explanatory matrix, (see [Appendix 1 Mapping Example](#))

Learning outcomes must be:

- consistent with programme aims and qualification GPOs
- measurable and achievable, and integrated to provide a balanced and logical programme of learning
- presented in a logical, progressive way that demonstrates learners' development of knowledge, skills, understanding and application.
- each component must contain learning outcomes for which learning and/or

assessment activities are designed. Component learning outcomes (skills, knowledge, abilities, or attributes) may together contribute to or comprise the programme outcomes.

### **Programme outcomes (if required)**

Programme outcomes are the over-arching outcomes (the skills, knowledge, abilities or attributes) a graduate of the programme will have achieved. In large programmes it is good practice – but not mandatory – to include the key outcomes all graduates will have achieved by the end of the programme.

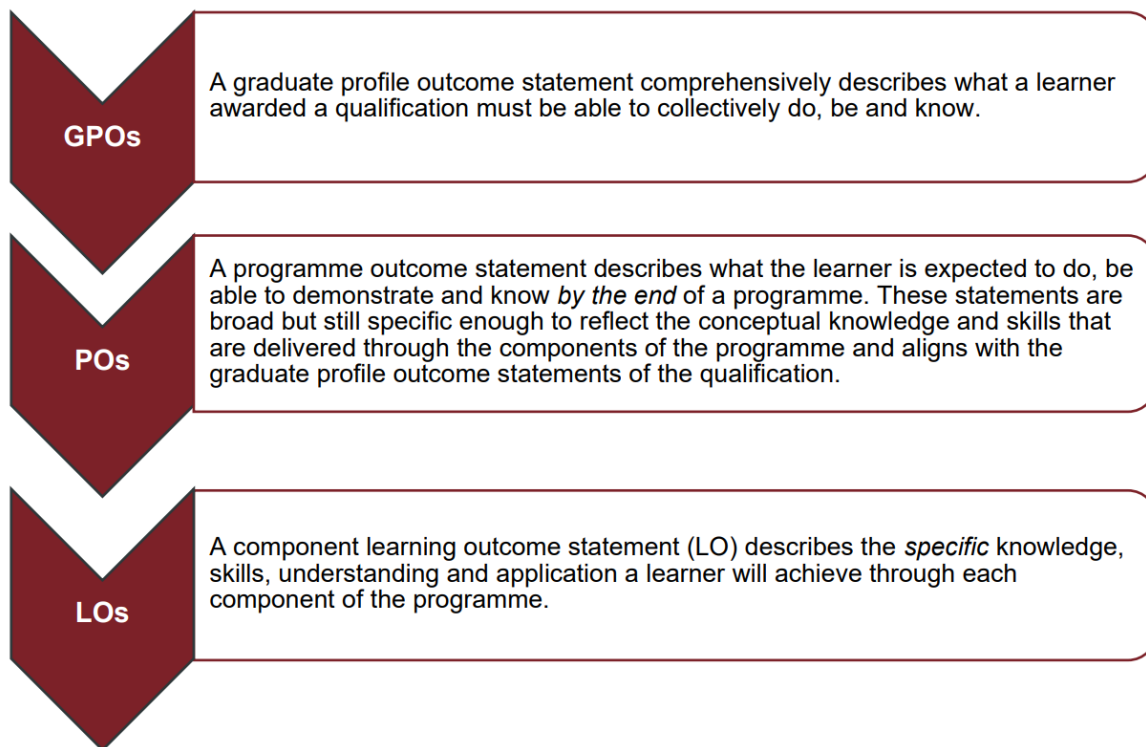


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Learning outcomes

The diagram above is from the *Writing learning outcomes: structure, considerations, and examples*. It is recommended that applicants refer to this booklet (link below) which offers more guidance on the structure, key considerations and common mistakes to avoid when writing learning outcomes.

↩ [Writing learning outcomes: structure, considerations, and examples.](#)

### **Standards and component learning outcomes**

If skill standards or assessment standards are in the qualification general conditions, they must be used in the programme.

Skill standards will specify learning outcomes that can be used for component learning outcomes.

The outcomes specified in unit standards may or may not be suitable for learning

outcomes in a programme.

This is because unit standards on the Directory serve a wide range of educational, cultural, and vocational purpose. Some are published with the standard format of a learning outcome (action verb, content and context) for example *Carry out electrofusion jointing on polyethylene pipes for water networks*, while others are designed for use in different contexts, for example *Plant trees or shrubs*, or *Write a report*.

Usually, task specific unit standards like *Write a report* are used in a package to assess component learning outcomes (which will describe the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that learners can expect to gain during the component.)

### **Programmes that use unit standards for assessment**

Unit standards' titles may be used as component learning outcomes. However in some cases, for example where several small credit unit standards are used, component learning outcomes should be written that summarise the unit standards' outcomes and/or provide context.

### **Coherence**

Overall, the programme must be structured to achieve qualification GPOs. The application must show how the components have been designed to form a coherent programme.

Consider and check that:

- there is progression, and integration of learning and assessment, throughout the programme
- components reflect the appropriate level and duration of learning
- requirements for progress and award of the qualification are clear.

### **Suggestions for supporting documents**

**Aims** should be part of the programme document and supported by documents developed for learner or employer information, e.g. marketing, draft website pages, prospectus.

**Components & Learning outcomes** may be in standalone component/ course / module /paper descriptors (see [Appendix 2 Component Descriptor Example](#)); or part of the programme document, and/or submitted as a supporting document in the format developed for teacher or learner use, e.g. teaching lessons, student handbook, materials.

**Coherence** can be shown in the programme document; through the mapping of programme outcomes and component learning outcomes to GPOs (see [Appendix 1 Mapping Example](#)) through the progression and award regulations, entry information for learners, and assessment information (see also, Approval Criterion 5: Regulations).

### Approval Criterion 3: Delivery methods

The delivery methods are adequate and appropriate, given the stated learning outcomes for the programme. Where specific resources are necessary for the programme to be provided, those resources are clearly outlined.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learner achievement of the learning outcomes is supported by the delivery methods and that learners are supported in ways suited to their educational, work, or cultural context.

#### Delivery mode

The application should indicate what the delivery mode of the programme is and explain how the delivery methods will support the specified target learner groups to achieve. A description of the teaching and learning approaches is required.

Will the programme be delivered

- in person, face-to-face in a traditional classroom setting
- in a workplace
- online in real time classes (synchronous)
- self-paced online via assignments, tasks, and quizzes (asynchronous)
- by including work placements, practicums, or block courses; or
- a combination of some or all the above?

A programme may have more than one mode, if different learner groups require a different learning pathway through the programme.

Alternatively, different learning pathways may be outlined in separate programmes. Two or more programmes may lead to the same qualification, for example, one programme in a full time on-campus mode and one programme in a blended mode for work-based learners.

Providers should offer flexibility in approach, allowing the learner the option to study or train via whichever means of delivery is best suited to when, where, and what students or trainees are learning and their personal circumstances.

If a programme has a variable duration e.g. part-time or fulltime options, or designed for individual learning plans, explain the different options using learning hours:

- total learning hours
- total duration (weeks)
- learning hours per week.

#### **Online delivery**

Support and advice where the mode of delivery is distance online is available here:

[Distance online delivery](#)



The guidance covers delivery through an online learning management system (LMS) which may include but is not limited to webinars / virtual lectures (recorded or live), online tutorials and discussions (synchronous or asynchronous), individual and group work (synchronous or otherwise via online fora and chats).

### **Work-based learning**

Work-based learning in programmes may include the following approaches:<sup>2</sup>

**Fully integrated workplace learning** in which most of the learning takes place on-job and is supported by learning materials from the workplace and TEOs. Learners are supported by their employers and by staff in TEOs.

This approach includes **work-based training** as defined in the Education and Training Act 2020.

**Learning practicums** where students – such as teachers, nurses, social workers, or counsellors – are placed in workplaces for ongoing blocks of learning during their time of study. These are variously referred to as practicums, placements, and field-based education.

**Work integrated learning (WIL)** where students work on a project basis for short periods of time. WIL opportunities may be through a work placement (e.g. internships, placements) or a work-related project (e.g. a final year project, community work).

**Simulated learning situations** where learners are fully located within a tertiary education provider but participate in replicated workplace learning situations. This can range from using software that workplaces use to simulate the work context, through to simulated clinical settings and actual construction projects or hospitality work within a tertiary organisation.

The instructional design for workplace learning needs to consider: the learning styles of the target learner profile (e.g. suitability for Māori or Pacific trainees); where training takes place (location); when to train and study (time), and for how much of the working week (duration); adaptation of methods to people with disabilities or learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexic trainees); when individual studies and/or group-based studies or activities is the best approach; how to integrate off-site components with on-job training.

Consider:

- Delivery schedule (outlining activities / topics and distribution of the learning hours) and/or an indicative intake plan outlining sequence of component delivery.
- How much in-person face-to-face training is managed by employer, supervisor, or workplace trainer?

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<sup>2</sup> Ako Aotearoa, [Learning in and for work: highlights from Ako Aotearoa research](#), October 2014

- Issues of managing work and study commitments while in employment.
- How much online learning is provided (and whether self-directed and self-paced using the provider's resources and/or real-time online classes is best for some components).
- Are staff adequately supported and professionally developed to teach/train, develop resources and support work-based learning?

The requirements for work-based learning must be set out in the Regulations.

### **Work-based training**

Support and advice where the mode of delivery is work-based training (as defined in the Education and Training Act 2020) is available here:

#### [Work-based training](#)

The guidance covers delivery for programmes where the majority of learning takes place in the workplace, using the employment context, with online, self-directed and/or cohort learning to support it, and programmes designed for arranging work-based training (including apprenticeship training) activities and support.

A note on delivery modes:

NZQA currently records delivery mode for programmes as follows:

1. **Face to face** – most of the study or training is proximate, in-person, either in provider-based or work-based settings.
2. **Distance** – most delivery is distant from the provider-based or work-based settings. This may be asynchronous learning working through online activities, or synchronous online interaction attended by a facilitator and a number of participants.
3. **Blended** – delivery includes significant amounts of time attending both in person classes or work and learning at a distance from the educator or trainer.

These modes are used by NZQA to distinguish products that rely entirely on distance (usually online) learning, from products where being in the same physical space, at least some of the time, is part of teaching and learning. Although remote videoconferencing involves face to face interaction, it is considered 'distance' for the purposes of these definitions. Also, note that 'blended' learning is sometimes used to describe delivery that uses more than one learning context, for example off-shore and on-shore or employer-led and provider-delivered. In the NZQA definitions 'blended' only refers to the blend of in-person and at a distance.

### **Delivery methods and learning activities**

These are the tools and formats used to engage with learners. They may be used in

any of the delivery modes.

The application should provide a description of the key learning activities that make up the learning hours, to justify the credit value of the programme, and show how they map to the learning outcomes and assessment.

Consider:

- how each delivery method will assist the target learner group in achieving the learning outcomes of the programme
- the educational rationale for any practical, work integrated learning
- the clear relationship between learning hours and credit value. (One credit is equivalent to 10 notional learning hours made up of planned learning activities.)
- the supply of, and learner access to, educational support, resources, or equipment
- ways of informing learners of the activities that will be expected of them if they enrol in a programme.

Methods and activities may include:

- research
- coaching
- tutorials
- lectures
- on-job instruction
- work-based activity
- conferences
- guest speakers
- group work
- field trips
- noho marae
- self-directed learning activities.

### ***Self-directed learning activities***

The application should show how any self-directed learning contributes to the overall programme of learning.

At lower levels, self-directed learning activities should be guided or planned to ensure the learning complements the directed learning activities and contributes to assessment. At higher levels, independent self-directed learning activities, such as reading and research, will be informed by the programmes' outcomes and the graduate profile of the qualification.

### ***Resources for supporting learner groups***

[Seven principles to effectively support Māori students as Māori](#)

[Four strategies to effectively support Pacific students](#)

[Supporting disabled tertiary learners in an online environment](#)

[Specific Learning Disability Definition](#)

[Work-based learning: models and approaches](#)

### **Suggestions for supporting documents**

Delivery information may be part of the programme document and supported by documents developed for learner or employer information, e.g. marketing, draft website pages, prospectus

Programme handbook

Component outlines

Timetables/delivery schedule

Student Handbook.

### **Approval Criterion 4: Acceptability of the programme and consultation**

There is a written summary of the consultation undertaken, the views expressed, and consideration of the views. The consultation and summary must articulate the need for and acceptability of the programme to the relevant communities (including ākonga, whānau, hapū, iwi and where appropriate, hāpori Māori) and other key stakeholders (including the qualification developer and any relevant academic, employer, industry, professional and other bodies) and any required endorsement by a WDC under section 366(1)(g) of the Act has been obtained.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that all learners have equitable access to the programme, will graduate 'work-ready' or equipped for further study, in an area of genuine need.

NZQA requires evidence that relevant stakeholders have been meaningfully involved in the design of the programme. The application must include evidence of engagement, feedback and support from the education organisation itself, relevant industry, employer, community, professional bodies or other interested groups.

For education organisations engaged only in the international market, consultation with communities, industry or employers is still required even though graduates may not be remaining in New Zealand in the long term. Consultation is necessary and beneficial, as learners may be on programmes that have work placement or work experience practicums built into them; and/or learners may remain in New Zealand for longer periods, and their education and qualifications should reflect the New Zealand context.

Education organisations with more than one delivery site should consult with the communities associated with each site where the programme is to be delivered.

### **Local whānau, hapū, iwi and where appropriate, hāpori Māori**

It is essential that education organisations maintain working partnerships with the Māori community most relevant to them and their operations. For any education organisation who has not established relationships, the following general information may assist in identifying the relevant group and engaging in the most appropriate manner.

To identify your local iwi, you are referred to:

- Te Kāhui Māngai is a web-based directory of Iwi and Māori Organisations ([www.tkm.govt.nz](http://www.tkm.govt.nz)), or
- Your local district council, or
- Your local Māori MP electoral office.

From these sources you should identify local iwi main office/ address area, identify the Runanga (the governing council or board of directors for iwi/hapū) and then identify the key person in the Runanga (e.g. CEO, chairperson, or nominated spokesperson).

Prior to engaging in discussions on the programme, it may support the process to become familiar with the iwi education plan or strategy so that you are aware of what the benefits of the programme and its Māori learners are to the iwi. Knowledge of the iwi tikanga (protocol) would be advantageous.

Consider, for example, how evidence of consultation with iwi, *hapū*, or *hāpori Māori* contributes to:

- teaching practices that are conducive to Māori learners,
- identified opportunities to develop policies and procedures for identifying distinct Māori learner needs
- processes to address equity issues for Māori learners
- how teaching environments and teaching methods meet the needs of Māori learners
- the development of resources.

The application must be able to show how Māori and Pacific learners will be considered and supported in the delivery of the programme.

### **Pasifika**

Integrating Pasifika methodologies such as *the Fonofale Model* that focusses on the importance of culture, family, environment, historical context and aspirations for Pacific people will support the needs of Pacific students. Based on these needs, educators can design ways to increase their participation in the class and provide them with an environment where the learners feel included and respected.

### **Industry**

Industry includes advocacy groups, trade associations, an association of industries or groups with allied interests, who are non-profit organisations, in general. Examples

include chambers of commerce, or business networks who aim to influence public policy, tertiary education and resource allocation decisions.

Industry is the category or general field in which an individual works or is preparing to work in. It is important that the programme is linked to the world of work; and consultation with industry may relate to the design of the programme, appropriate learner projects or periods in employment, internships or work placements. Ultimately, industry must be asked what the relevant skills, knowledge and attributes are, to ensure graduates meet the needs of industry.

### **Employers**

Employers, as distinct to industry, have more specific and immediate requirements. They will be employing graduates of the programmes and will be focused on graduates' work-ready skills, knowledge and attributes. Improving graduate employability skills contributes to the long-term sustainability of the programme. Consultation with employers should also inform the development of authentic assessments for the programme.

### **Qualification Developers**

NZQA requires evidence of acceptability of the programme to the qualification developer.

Qualification developers can provide guidance on the proposed programme, or advise if there are new rules, regulations, specifications or conditions since the qualification was listed. Qualification developers may request all or some of the following:

- a copy of the proposed programme
- an overview of industry and/or community input into the programme development, e.g. advisory group composition and process
- a programme overview (delivery of practicum/theory, assessment and moderation approach)
- an outline of the resources required to deliver the programme
- evidence that any guidance in the qualification document has been considered when developing the programme.

Most NZQCF qualifications will have a WDC as the qualification developer, or NZQA's Ngā Poutoko Aromatawai Māori (Māori Qualification Services and National Qualifications Services).

To find the qualification developer, search for the qualification by keyword or qualification number on our qualification search page. Click on the qualification to view the name of the qualification developer:

[Qualifications - Advanced Search](#)

### **Workforce Development Council (WDC) endorsement**

There are six WDCs:

- Hanga-Aro-Rau (Manufacturing, Engineering and Logistics) Workforce Development Council
- Muka Tangata (People, Food and Fibre) Workforce Development Council
- Ringa Hora (Services) Workforce Development Council
- Toi Mai Workforce Development Council
- Toitū te Waiora (Community, Health, Education and Social Services) Workforce Development Council
- Waihanga Ara Rau (Construction and Infrastructure) Workforce Development Council.

Programmes are subject to WDC endorsement where they:

- a) Lead to qualifications developed by the WDC (or being maintained by the WDC);  
or
- b) Lead to any other qualification at levels 3–7 (non-degree) that
  - is designed to be, or that acts as, an entry point to or a way to advance within, an industry under the coverage of a WDC; and
  - appears on a list of such qualifications authorised by the WDC.

[Notice to Define when Workforce Development Councils will Endorse Programmes](https://www.gazette.govt.nz) -  
gazette.govt.nz

Providers that require endorsement by a WDC under section 366(1)(g) of the Act must include a *Letter of Endorsement* from a WDC with an NZQA Programme Approval application.

This is required for new programmes and for Type 2 changes to an existing programme.

WDC considerations for endorsement focus on the question ‘How well does the programme meet industry need?’.

There are six considerations, which are the same across all WDCs:

- Programme content
- Equity for learners
- Programme engagement and consultation
- Te Ao Māori context
- Pacific languages and learners
- Disabled people

If the WDC has concerns about the programme, it will work with the education organisation to help resolve those concerns.

More details are available on each WDC’s website:

[www.ohumahi.nz](http://www.ohumahi.nz)



### **WDC support for consent to assess**

Providers that do not hold consent to assess for standards in the programme should apply for programme endorsement at the same time as requesting a letter of support for consent to assess.

The WDC will confirm if the provider has successfully met the relevant Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR), many of which cover programme accreditation criteria. See each WDC's website for more information on consent to assess.

### **Other qualification developers**

Non-vocational qualifications in Foundation and Bridging are managed by NZQA's National Qualification Services and Field Māori qualifications are managed by NZQA's Māori Qualification Services. There are also qualifications that are developed and maintained by TEOs.

If the programme leads to a vocational qualification developed by another educational organisation, support from the qualification developer, as described above, is required in addition to WDC endorsement.

Vocational qualifications developed by other qualification developers can be found here:

#### [Qualifications for WDC endorsement](#)

If the programme leads to a qualification developed by NZQA, or a University, WDC endorsement is not required.

### **Academic Bodies or Boards**

Academic bodies are usually groups who have responsibilities for academic related matters within an institution or who share academic connections in a certain area in different institutions or organisations.

The rationale for including academic bodies, both within and beyond the institution, is to build up strong academic grounds for the development of the proposed programme, including programme structure and components, entry requirements, arrangements for assessment and moderation; and to foster a quality consistency of qualifications and graduates.

### **Professional Bodies**

Professional bodies are usually non-profit membership organisations in a learned occupation that specify the requirements for entry to the profession or professional body, identify requirements for continued membership, and set out the code of conduct for the profession as well as complaints and disciplinary procedures. Consider, for example, Engineering New Zealand, Human Resource Institute of New Zealand Management (HRINZ), NZ Institute of Safety Management (NZISM).

The rationale for including professional bodies in consultation is to ensure that the voice from the profession is heard and acted on so that the proposed programme is

developed to meet the professional needs and standards.

### **Regulatory Bodies**

Regulatory bodies are public organisations or authorities that are established by government to exercise a regulatory function, e.g. imposing requirements, restrictions and conditions; setting standards; and enforcing compliance. For example, Plumbers, Gasfitters, Drainlayer's and Roofers Registration Board, the Civil Aviation Authority, and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

The obligation to consult regulatory bodies is to ensure (when applicable) that the programme meets relevant regulatory requirements and conditions.

### **Other Bodies**

Other bodies include cultural or community groups such as student bodies, education partners, umbrella organisations, religious groups, or significant organisations which comprise part of the target learner group.

### **Suggestions for supporting documents**

Notes of meetings with external advisors / stakeholders

Letters of support from stakeholders

WDC application form, and WDC letter of endorsement (required)

Copies of relevant agreements with providers of work or field-based components

Memoranda of understanding of stair-casing and cross-crediting with New Zealand or overseas organisations

Copies of contracts with any other organisations on which the programme relies

Description of how each stakeholder informed the design of the proposed programme

Consultation Log – see [Appendix 3 Consultation Log Example](#)

## **Approval Criterion 5: Regulations**

There are clear, relevant, and appropriate regulations that specify requirements for

- admission
- credit recognition and transfer
- recognition of prior learning
- programme length and structure
- integration of practical and work-based components
- assessment procedures, including authenticity of student work
- normal progression within the programme.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learners on the programme understand progress through the programme and the rules for qualification award.

### **Admission and selection**

Entry requirements should not pose any unreasonable barriers to entry and must be appropriate to the type and level of study. They may include for example, age, academic record, physical fitness, literacy, numeracy, previous learning or experience, or legislation (e.g. working with children).

Selection processes may be used to ensure learner success, or, if the number of applicants exceeds the available places on the programme. They may include date of application, interview, placement tests (e.g. for languages), recital, references.

### **English language entry requirements**

English language requirements for international students are set out in Rule 22 of the Programme Approval, Rules 2022.

The Appendix of the Programme Approval, Recognition, and Accreditation Rules sets out for each of the internationally recognised proficiency tests, the Programme Level and required outcome that must be applied for each level.

[Go to the Appendix](#)

The New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) at levels 3-5 are listed as internationally recognised proficiency tests in the Table. NZCEL is a qualification so it remains on a learner's record of learning and can be used by the learner throughout their lifetime to show their learning history and academic achievement. However, to meet English language requirements for programme entry, NZCEL has a 2-year validity period in the same way as other tests listed in the *Table*.

### **Credit recognition and transfer and recognition of prior learning**

The provisions for awarding credit towards a qualification or exemptions from specific programme requirements should cover:

- cross-crediting (from another programme within the organisation)
- credit transfer (from a programme awarded by another organisation) (CRT)
- recognition of prior learning (credit awarded for informal or uncertificated learning).

Any limitations on credit awarded from cross-credit or recognition of prior learning (RPL) should be included with the reason for applying the limit.

Learning credited through CRT or RPL is of equal standing with formal learning. This means there should be no arbitrary barriers or limits on the learning that can be credited through CRT or RPL, although limits are permitted. For more information read our guidelines:

[Recognising learning for credit: Guidelines for the recognition and award of credit for learning](#)

### ***Programme length, structure and integration of practical and work-based components***

Regulations should refer to a detailed programme structure, including:

- maximum and minimum periods for completion of a component and/or the programme
- any specified pre- and co-requisites, compulsory and optional/elective components, practical and work-based requirements, alternative entry points
- micro-credentials that can be used to meet programme requirements
- how practical and work-based requirements are integrated into the programme.

### ***Assessment procedures, including authenticity of student work***

Regulations should refer to:

- grading of components and how this contributes to completion of the programme
- how, and when, learners will get results from components
- how, and when, final transcripts are issued, and qualifications awarded
- the achieved/not achieved or graded assessment criteria (e.g., a grade Key)
- re-assessments and re-submission
- appeals
- provisions for where learners cannot complete an assessment because of circumstances beyond their control
- the availability of assessment through te reo Māori
- controlled assessment (e.g. examination) rules.
- Procedures to establish/confirm authenticity should include:
- Prevention activities. For example, management of assessment materials so current students cannot access previous students' tests.
- Detection activities. For example, the use of plagiarism software.

A Guide that addresses prevention and detection of cheating through documented and systematised practices is available here:

[Effective practice in preventing and detecting academic fraud](#)

### ***Normal progression within the programme***

The expected or normal progress through the programme should be described.

Consider the learners' ability to:

- repeat parts in subsequent delivery
- study part-time
- commence at any time (rolling enrolment)
- plan for a calendared start date (for example delivery by semester)
- enrol in different streams.

### **Stacking micro-credentials to qualifications**

Although micro-credentials are developed and delivered as standalone products, they may also build upon or complement each other. Programmes leading to qualifications may include micro-credentials as components of learning, provided the overall design of the programme is coherent and meets the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose.

If several micro-credentials are developed together or a programme is developed alongside them, the relationship between them should be stated, and how they contribute to achieving the qualification outcomes.

If the micro-credential can be stacked towards a degree or post-graduate qualification, it must be designed to be taught mainly by people engaged in research.

Approval of a micro-credential does not guarantee that a programme composed of the micro-credential will be approved. Similarly, approved programme components are not always suitable for stacking.

### **Suggestions for supporting documents for regulations:**

A complete set of the relevant regulations e.g. in the form of a learner or programme handbook, or separately referenced section of a Quality Management System (QMS)

Academic regulations e.g. the grade key, assessment processes, appeals, re-submissions

Admission requirements and procedures; Offer of Place, English language proficiency requirements; enrolment form and procedures, prospectuses, marketing or promotional material

Enrolment information for students (may be in the student handbook, prospectus draft website)

Sample academic transcript

Additional work placement/work-based learning documentation e.g. MOUs, letters to employers.

Map of the relationship between micro-credential/s and the programme that shows alignment of learning outcomes, components, and assessment requirements.

Information that relates to students' progress, completion, qualification and/or education pathways.

### **Approval Criterion 6: Assessment and moderation**

Assessment methodology is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate given the stated learning outcomes. There is an effective system for moderation of assessment materials and decisions.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure the learner has the right assessment opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.

### **Assessment methodology**

Assessment methods must be appropriate for the subject matter, mode of delivery, level of learning and learning outcomes.

Assessments must be specified for each component, and:

- focus on the learning outcomes to be assessed
- enable accurate decisions to be made about learner achievement
- specify the standard of expected performance and criteria to be used
- consider the overall workload for learners.

📁 The application should include examples of assessment methods and/or materials e.g. written examination, workplace observation, verbal presentation, written assignment.

### **Resources**

[Assessment tools and approaches.](#)

[Assessment of standards.](#)

Information on assessment in an online (distance) delivery mode:

[Online assessment: guidance for providers.](#)

[Getting it right: Guidelines for Online Assessment.](#)

Information on assessment writing for work-based learning:

[David E Gray, A Briefing on Work-based Learning.](#) – ResearchGate website

[European Training Foundation - Work-based learning handbook \(pp. 33-34 / 54-57\)](#)

### **Moderation systems**

Outline how external and internal moderation will be managed for the programme. This includes moderation of materials before they are used for assessment, moderation of assessment decisions before results are released to learners (if applicable), and moderation of assessor decisions post – assessment for self-assessment.

Moderation should focus on whether there is enough evidence that:

- the learner has achieved the learning outcome(s)
- the learner work is authentic
- assessment materials allow learners the opportunity to achieve the learning outcome(s)
- assessors are being consistent in their judgements.

Consider:

- process governance (who has responsibility for moderation, are there subject matter experts to undertake it?)

- proportions of pre and post assessment moderation (how many assessments will be selected for moderation?)
- frequency of moderation (when will moderation take place?)
- conditions for resubmission and/or resit of assessments
- any special requirements for moderation, e.g. if the programme is delivered by another provider.

### **Internal moderation**

An effective internal moderation system:

- ensures that all assessment materials are moderated and approved before being used with learners (pre assessment moderation)
- verifies the fairness, validity, and consistency of assessor decisions before results are reported (post assessment moderation)
- provides feedback to assessors, assessment writers, and programme developers on the quality and effectiveness of assessment
- accommodates a variety of learning outcomes and assessment contexts (for example, onsite moderation for practical outcomes)
- clearly defines the role of all internal participants
- informs training and ongoing professional development opportunities
- provides participants with enough time to complete their moderation activities
- is viewed by participants as a value-add activity
- results in regular reviews, updates to assessments, and improved assessment practice
- contributes to the continuous improvement of the programme for stakeholders.

### **External moderation**

External moderation provides an assurance that assessment decisions, in relation to assessment standards, are consistent when moderated outside the applicants' organisation.

It is not compulsory under NZQA Rules for a TEO to engage an external party in its moderation system. However, NZQA strongly encourages TEOs to set up reciprocal moderation arrangements.

Standard setting bodies (SSBs), such as NZQA and WDCs, conduct external moderation of standards for which they are the SSB. Each SSB has their own moderation requirements which TEOs must comply with if they are assessing and reporting results against their standards.

Guidance for standards-based moderation is on our website:

[National external moderation for tertiary education organisations](#)



## Approval Criterion 7: Programme Review

The institution:

- assesses the currency and content of the programme
- has adequate and effective processes for the ongoing review of the programme, taking account of the results of any review of the qualification
- has adequate and effective processes for monitoring the quality of outcomes for learners and other stakeholders, and for reviewing programme regulations and content
- updates the programme accordingly.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure learners achieve quality graduate outcomes as a result of the education organisation's programme review and self-assessment.

### **Self-assessment**

Self-assessment enables a tertiary education organisation to find out what outcomes learners are achieving and how well; the value and currency of the outcomes to stakeholders including learners; and the effectiveness of processes in contributing to these outcomes. By identifying strengths and weaknesses, an education organisation can develop and implement improvement strategies.

More information, including case studies of self-assessment can be found on our website:

#### [Self-Assessment](#)

Use External Evaluation and Review (EER) Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) to guide self-assessment:

1. How well do learners achieve?
2. What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?
3. How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of learners and other relevant stakeholders?
4. How effectively are learners supported and involved in their learning?
5. How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?
6. How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

For more information see

#### [Key Evaluation Questions](#)

### **Currency and content**

Links for checking currency and updating programmes:

Vocational Pathway Programmes can be checked and tested using the Ministry of

Education's Profile Builder tool.

[Profile Builder Tool](#) - Youth guarantee website (MoE)

Changes to unit standards are set out in Review Summaries on our website:

[Review change report summaries](#)

Find the replacement for expiring standards (if there is one) by selecting 'Unit replacements by ID' in the NZQA Framework Search tool.

[Framework Search](#)

### **Suggestions for supporting documents**

Notes of meetings with external advisors / stakeholders

Letters of support from stakeholders

Student experience survey templates

### 3. Accreditation

NZQA evaluates the programme against the criteria in Rule 7 of the Programme Approval, Recognition, and Accreditation Rules 2022 and considers the application using the following key evaluation question:

**To what extent does the education provider have the ongoing capability and resources to support sustained delivery of the approved programme?**

An education organisation will be accredited if all of the following applies. If there:

- is good evidence the education organisation has the capability and resources to provide the programme.
- is good evidence that the education organisation can manage the impacts of any specific programme requirements.
- are formal arrangements with the programme approval holder where required.
- are no significant gaps or weaknesses in the application or evidence provided.

An education organisation will not be accredited if any of the above are not evident.

#### Accreditation: Consent to assess

Where the programme or part of the programme for which accreditation is sought includes assessment of standards listed on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards, and the applicant is not the holder of a consent to assess against those standards under section 449 of the Act the applicant must also provide evidence of the applicant's ability to meet the consent and moderation requirements for those standards.

Rule 8.4

When a provider is granted accreditation to deliver a programme that includes standards from the Directory, they are also granted consent to assess those standards.

#### [Consent to assess](#)

Accreditation applications – where consent is required – must show how the proposed delivery will meet the Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR).

WDC support for consent to assess, and WDC programme endorsement is required before an application is made to NZQA. See Approval criterion 4 - Workforce Development Council (WDC) endorsement.

## Accreditation Criterion 1: Assessment and moderation

The institution has the capability and capacity to ensure assessment materials and decisions are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate for the level, given the stated learning outcomes.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that decisions made on learner evidence meet the requirements of the programme and the qualification.

The key principles for assessment in NZQA-approved programmes are that assessment is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate given the stated learning outcomes.

- Fair. Assessment processes, activities, conditions and marking provide equal opportunity for all learners to achieve.
- Valid. Assessment has a clear purpose and measures what it aims to measure. Learner work is authentic.
- Consistent. Assessor judgements are reliable and accurate across all learners, regardless of who does the assessing or when the assessment occurs.
- Appropriate given the stated learning outcomes. Assessment activities and assessor decisions reflect the knowledge, skills, and application of knowledge or skills required at the appropriate NZQCF level.

### **All learning outcomes contribute to the GPOs and all must be achieved to meet the GPOs.**

The assessment must ensure that a 'pass' reflects the minimum acceptable level of performance for each learning outcome.

When designing assessment materials, TEOs should ensure that:

- all of the learning outcomes are assessed
- marking guidance includes criteria for the minimum acceptable level of performance required for each learning outcome
- there are judgement statements for each learning outcome, whether the assessment tool assesses one learning outcome or multiple learning outcomes?

Check and ensure that the assessment regime is practical and cost-effective, and that assessor qualifications align with the requirements of the programme.

## Accreditation Criterion 2: Resources

The institution has the capability and capacity to support sustained delivery of the programme through appropriate academic staffing, teaching facilities, educational and physical resources, and support services.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that the learner has access to support, expertise and materials required for delivery of the programme.

### ***Appropriate staff***

The education organisation should have staff on appropriate employment agreements to deliver the programme in a sustainable manner. Collectively, the teaching staff must be adequate in numbers, have appropriate qualifications and, where relevant, New Zealand experience to ensure and maintain high standards.

Tutors on contract should be engaged in the same quality systems as permanent employees, inducted into moderation processes, updated on delivery changes, and upskilled with professional development as necessary.

Guest speakers, although a valuable resource for providing a real or realistic context to a programme, are not a substitute for experienced and qualified teaching staff. The use of guest speakers is an acceptable learning activity; however, the guest speaker should be organised (not impromptu) and have a clear purpose that contributes to the overall outcomes of the programme (and ideally can be connected to specific learning outcomes).

### ***Appropriate qualifications for staff***

The qualification held by tutoring/teaching staff should be in a relevant discipline to the specific component being taught and must be at least one level higher than the qualification being awarded.

Staff must meet the requirements in the relevant CMR if the programme is assessed using standards from the Directory.

It is strongly recommended that teaching/tutorial staff hold, or be working towards, a tertiary teaching qualification, such as the New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Teaching (Level 4) or the New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Teaching (Level 5), or equivalent.

### ***Teaching and learning facilities***

A list of the key physical, teaching and learning resources to support the delivery of the programme is required. Consider the quality and size of classrooms for programme numbers, spaces for group work, laboratory or practical activities.

### ***Delivery Sites***

See [Approval of delivery sites](#)

### ***Student support services and resources***

A learner/programme handbook (or draft) with programme information guidance should describe the general support and guidance services offered to learners and how they will be applied to this programme.

Consider:

- how learners will receive feedback on their progress
- support to assist learners to progress, including access to information

technology

- who will provide support and how students can access it.

### **Educational resources**

Educational resources should suit the delivery mode (face to face, blended or distance).

Consider:

- what Learning Management System (LMS) has been selected and how will it support delivery of programme content?
- do learners have access to relevant online resources such as e-journals, conference databases, etc.?
- do learners have access to relevant materials, for example laboratory equipment and consumables?
- do learners have access to recommended textbooks, library and/or WiFi?

### **Online delivery**

For programmes that are delivered online see our detailed guidance:

[Distance online delivery.](#)

### **Sub-contracting**

Where part of the programme is delivered by another provider or entity NZQA subcontracting approval is required.

For more information go to:

[Agreements between organisations](#)

### **Suggestions for supporting documents**

Evidence of resources or the plan to procure the resources to deliver the programme

Evidence from the organisation's senior management about the availability of resources including staff, finance and any special requirements for the ongoing viability/sustainability of the programme e.g. a statement of attestation from the Chief Executive, Director or equivalent

Curriculum vitae of current staff or position descriptions of the staff who will deliver the programme

Examples of information provided to learners

Description of how learners' progress is identified, results reported, monitored and the range of actions available to address their progress

Copies of agreements between the provider, learner, and the employer

Arrangements for work-based training.

### Accreditation Criterion 3: Support for delivery

If the applicant institution is not the holder of the programme approval, there is support from the holder of the programme approval.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that the holder of the programme approval is aware that another provider intends to deliver their programme, supports this, and is willing to support the applicant to deliver the programme as approved.

Where the applicant is not the sole programme approval holder or is seeking accreditation for a programme where approval is held by another party, evidence of formal arrangements must be included in the application.

These arrangements should cover:

- programme changes and reviews
- dispute resolution
- moderation of outcomes
- managing complaints about quality of delivery
- involvement in ongoing programme review.

Supporting documents

The application must include evidence of support from the holder of the programme approval and any specific delivery requirements if applicable.

### Accreditation Criterion 4: Programme Review

There must be adequate and effective review of programme performance and the institution's capability to support the programme.

There must be monitoring of improvement following review, and processes for determining whether the programme should continue to be delivered.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learners are completing programmes that meet their needs and the needs of relevant communities (including ākongā, whānau, hapū, iwi and where appropriate, hāpori Māori) and other key stakeholders (including the qualification developer and any relevant academic, employer, industry, professional and other bodies).

If required endorsement by a WDC under section 366(1)(g) of the Act must be obtained.

#### **Programme review**

The responsibility for demonstrating how graduates will meet qualification requirements and outcomes through their programme rests with each education organisation through its self-assessment processes.

There is overlap in this requirement with the self-assessment expected by programme

approval holders. Applicants for accreditation should focus on how organisational *capability* will be reviewed, to ensure it is delivered as designed.

An effective programme review process:

- measures and monitors the quality of outcomes for learners and stakeholders, particularly for Māori and Pacific learners
- ensures that the programme structure and content is current and reflects the needs and feedback of key stakeholders and learners
- evaluates emerging industry, employment and/or education pathway information to establish the impact on programme value and viability
- confirms that assessment and moderation systems support the credibility of learner outcomes
- confirms that academic staffing, support services, facilities, and educational and physical resources support sustained delivery of the programme
- results in timely updates to the programme to reflect the current version of the qualification
- ensures management oversight of the programme delivery and review process
- monitors the effectiveness of any programme changes and confirms they are adding value for learners and stakeholders
- confirms guidelines and expectations for the programme review are clear and followed.

### **WDC Endorsement**

A reviewed programme must be endorsed by the relevant WDC if the outcome means a Type 2 change is required. For more information go to Approval Criterion 4:

[Workforce Development Council \(WDC\) endorsement.](#)

### **Maintaining accreditation to provide approved programme**

Under Section 439(1) of the Act, an accreditation to provide an approved programme lapses when—

- (a) 12 months have passed since accreditation was granted and the institution has not during that time provided all or part of the programme to which the accreditation relates; or
- (b) 12 months have passed since the institution last provided all or part of the programme to which the accreditation relates; or
- (c) the programme to which the accreditation relates ceases to be an approved programme; or
- (d) the status of the qualification to which the accreditation relates is discontinued on the Qualifications and Credentials Framework.

Education organisations must contact Approvals and Accreditation to request an extension to accreditation.

Please contact: [qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz)



## 4. Making changes to programmes

The need to make changes to an approved programme may arise from:

- the programme review process
- internal or external moderation
- qualification review
- EER
- consistency reviews
- monitoring and assessment and any other processes.

Changes are defined in the Rules as Type 1 or Type 2.

### Type 1

#### Rule 3.1

Type 1 change means one or more changes to components of an approved programme which do not impact on the programme as a whole.

A Type 1 change is a minor change to a programme component(s) which does not impact on the overall programme aim, content and outcomes.

Type 1 change notifications are emailed to [qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz) with an updated programme document. NZQA will acknowledge the notification of a Type 1 change and add the changes to our records. We will make contact if the proposed changes are Type 2 changes.

### Type 2

#### Rule 3.1

Type 2 change means one or more changes to components of an approved programme which do have an impact on the programme as a whole.

A Type 2 change must be approved by NZQA prior to implementation.

### WDC Endorsement

A programme must be endorsed by the relevant WDC before a Type 2 change application is made to NZQA. Guidance for Type 2 change endorsement can be found on each WDC's website: [www.ohumahi.nz](http://www.ohumahi.nz)

### Process for making a Type 2 change

Apply via the TEO portal using the secure log-in.

NZQA reviews the programme in light of the proposed change. TEOs should ensure that any proposed change does not affect the overall coherence of the programme.

If the number and/or extent of the proposed changes are so significant that the

programme is markedly different to the current version of the programme, then the applicant may be advised to submit a new programme application.

## Examples of Type 1 and Type 2 changes

The following examples may be useful.

### Criterion 1 - Qualification that the programme leads to

#### Type 1

Updated to reflect a new version of the qualification e.g. minor changes to GPOs, conditions, and/or credits; and does not affect programme coherence.

[Example of a qualification review.](#)

#### Type 2

Updated to reflect a new version of the qualification e.g. significant changes to GPOs, conditions, and/or credits. This requires evaluation of the programme for alignment and overall impact.

[Example of a qualification review](#)

Updated to reflect a replacement qualification with new NZQCF number.

[Example of a qualification review](#)

### Criterion 2 - Title, Learning outcomes and coherence

#### Type 1

Change to programme title.

Change to the title or code of a component e.g. a course title or course code.

Minor change to learning outcomes e.g. clarification, change for consistency, reducing duplication.

Change to sequence of components e.g. affects enrolment or timetables but not regulations or rules for award.

#### Type 2

Major change to learning outcomes e.g. impacts alignment with GPOs.

Change to the number of components e.g. adding, combining or removing components.

### Criterion 3 - Delivery methods

#### Type 1

Minor change to total learning hours, eg redistribution of the division of directed and self-directed hours, or revision of the unit standards has increased or decreased the credit value of one or two of the components and the programme as a whole.

Addition of part time option.

Addition of online only offshore delivery (if the programme is already approved for 100% distance/online) and qualification is appropriate for intended countries.)

Change to holiday weeks.

### **Type 2**

Change to the mode of components e.g. work placement replaced by online

Significant change to Programme length and structure

## **Criterion 5 - Regulations**

### **Type 1**

Change to entry requirements (if the programme does not involve an external or regulatory stakeholder) eg, changing the English Language requirements to ensure clear alignment with the Table 1 PAA rules; changes to the age requirements; changes to the entry procedures such as a literacy and numeracy test or applicant interviews.

### **Type 2**

Change to include a requirement that the student must be employed.

## **Criterion 6 - Assessment**

### **Type 1**

Adjustment to Grade Key.

Amended assessment methods and/or assessment weightings (e.g. essay replaced with a test).

Changes to unit standards' versions (B-category) but there are no significant impacts on coherence e.g. outcomes, levels and credits changed but no significant impact on associated component learning outcomes, or overall programme levels or credits.

Direct swap of unit standards replacements (C-category) as advised by SSB in the review report and no significant impacts on the programme.

### **Type 2**

Changes to overall assessment methodology e.g. achievement-based to competency-based, or practical to theory.

Changes to unit standards' versions and component learning outcomes significantly affected.

Replacement of D-category (no direct swap) expiring standards.

### Contact us

If you are still not sure if the changes are Type 1 or Type 2, talk to your Approvals and Accreditation contact person (listed under 'NZQA Contacts' on your TEO profile).

## 5. Agreements between organisations

### Sub-contracting

An accredited education organisation can arrange for another organisation to provide all or part of an approved programme on their behalf. NZQA considers this a sub-contracting arrangement.

There are different requirements when an education organisation engages a sub-contractor. These requirements depend on whether the sub-contractor involved has accreditation for the programme or not.

#### **Sub-contractor has accreditation**

If the education organisation proposes to use a sub-contractor, and both have accreditation the education organisation should notify NZQA of the arrangement and provide a copy of the signed agreement.

#### **Sub-contractor doesn't have accreditation**

If the education organisation has accreditation for the programme but the sub-contractor does not, the education organisation must apply to NZQA for approval to engage the sub-contractor and provide the required information including a copy of the signed agreement.

### Requirements for sub-contracting notification

Organisations must provide the following to NZQA:

- a copy of the sub-contracting agreement which must outline the responsibilities and obligations of the parties
- the duration of the arrangement
- the reasons for the arrangement
- confirmation that any advertising and other information provided to prospective students clearly shows that the education involved is provided under a sub-contracting arrangement.

### Requirements for sub-contracting applications

Organisations must provide the following to NZQA:

- the name of the sub-contractor:
- identification of the programme (s) or part(s) to be provided under the arrangement
- the rationale for the proposed sub-contracting arrangement
- a copy of the sub-contracting arrangement between the organisation and the sub-contractor
- evidence of internal quality assurance approval by the organisation
- process for review of delivery
- process for resolution of disputes.

The sub-contracting arrangement must specify:

- clear process for the review of the arrangement and for the termination of the arrangement, and
- procedures for the protection of learners if the arrangement is terminated.

### **Granting approval**

NZQA will grant approval where it is satisfied that:

- the institution remains responsible for the sub-contractor meeting all of the institution's obligations that are relevant for the accreditation:
- the sub-contractor will meet all relevant obligations in the Act and in rules made under section 452 of the Act in relation to the provision of the programme or part:
- there is a formal documented arrangement between the holder and the sub-contractor that includes provisions to ensure that NZQA is able to exercise its quality assurance and enforcement powers and functions in respect of the acts or omissions of the sub-contractor relating to the provision of the programme or part:
- the information and advertising for the study or training clearly states that it is provided through a sub-contracting arrangement:
- all student enrolments are through the institution, and the institution maintains all student enrolment and academic information.

NZQA will not grant approval where there is insufficient evidence that the subcontractor has the staff expertise, physical resources, hardware or equipment to deliver and/or assess the programme.

A clear rationale is required if the accredited organisation is not delivering the programme itself and delivery of the entire programme by sub-contractor is proposed.

### **What is not subcontracting?**

If an education organisation arranges for an individual (i.e., not the person's business or company) to deliver and/or assess all or part of a programme on its behalf via an individual contract for services agreement, then the contracted person is considered an employee, and this is not considered subcontracting.

For more information on the requirements for sub-contracting, please contact Approvals and Accreditation: [qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz)

## 6. The application process

### How to apply

Application instructions are set out in the Online TEO applications section of the NZQA website:

[Online TEO applications](#)

Information about online TEO applications:

[Online programme approval and accreditation application](#)

The instructions for schools are here:

[Online school applications](#)

### **When the application is received**

When the application is received an email quoting an NZQA case number will be sent to the applicant. This number stays with the application through to its outcome.

The application will be assigned to the Approvals and Accreditation team or Quality Assurance Māori team. Another email will advise the applicant of the Evaluator's name and contact details.

The Evaluator will commence evaluation and will contact the applicant if the submission lacks sufficient evidence for the evaluation to be carried out.

### **Timeframes**

NZQA will process applications within 45 working days, or 30 working days for category 1 education organisations. This does not include requests for information (RFIs). During an RFI, the application is on hold.

### **Supporting documents**

This guide offers suggestions for supporting documents. Please indicate how the documents support the application if it is not obvious.

A simple template for a programme document is here:

[Appendix 4 Programme document Example \[DOCX, 18 KB\]](#)

### **Evaluation**

The Evaluator will assess the application against the criteria in the NZQA Rules, and will consider the application as a whole with the key evaluation question(s):

- How well does the programme design match the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose?
- To what extent does the education provider have the ongoing capability and resources to support sustained delivery of the approved programme?

## **Request for information (RFI)**

What does it mean?

Overall, the Evaluator has deemed the application meets most of the criteria and is supported by documentation of sufficient quality that an RFI should resolve any questions about the programme's design or delivery.

Further work may be required to aspects of the programme's design or delivery plans. Where possible, suggestions are made to assist the applicant. In some cases, the RFI will comprise questions about missing or unclear documentation.

The findings of the evaluation are set out in an RFI report. The Evaluator is available to explain or clarify the RFI.

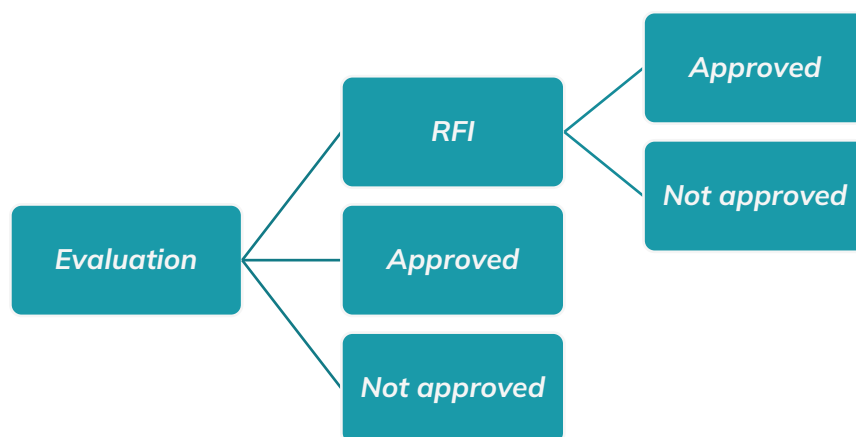
If the Evaluator concludes that the response to the RFI has not addressed the issues raised, then the application will not be approved.

## **Outcome**

Applications will be approved or not approved.

If the application is not approved, the reasons are set out in a report linked to the criteria in the NZQA Rules. The Evaluator is available for a phone call or meeting, or to provide clarification via email, in response to the outcome letter and report.

If applications are approved the education organisation will receive an approval letter with a copy of the approved programme details recorded on the NZQA system.



*Figure 2: Evaluation process*

## **What will it cost?**

The work on the application is charged at a rate of \$190 per hour plus GST.

### [NZQA Fees](#)

The evaluation of a high-quality application for a new programme approval and accreditation - that does not require an RFI - may take 3-4 hours including peer review.