



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD  
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

Guidelines to the implementation  
of the New Zealand Qualifications  
Framework Offshore Programme  
Delivery Rules *for organisations  
other than universities*

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## Introduction

To deliver a programme offshore that leads to a qualification listed on the NZQF, all New Zealand tertiary education organisations (TEOs) must meet the *Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021* and the *Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2021*.

Only universities and category 1 and 2 tertiary education organisations (TEOs) may apply for approval and accreditation to deliver offshore.

This document provides guidance for non-university TEOs, institutes of technology and polytechnics, wānanga, government training establishments and private training establishments, on applying for offshore programme approval and accreditation.

The guidelines need to be read in conjunction with the Approval and Accreditation Guidelines which provide guidance on the requirements for programme approval and accreditation.

### ***Offshore delivery approval is required***

**The NZQF Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2021 apply in the following situations:**

- Offshore delivery of an approved programme, or part of an approved programme, by a New Zealand TEO.
- Partnership arrangements, where an overseas institution delivers all or part of an approved programme offshore, in partnership with a New Zealand TEO.
- Students are enrolled for one year with an overseas institution and two years with a New Zealand institution; the qualification is awarded by the New Zealand institution.
- Distance or e-learning delivery of an approved programme that is marketed to offshore students by a New Zealand TEO or an offshore partner.

**The Offshore Programme Delivery Rules do not apply to:**

- articulation arrangements where a New Zealand TEO cross-credits an overseas qualification, or part of an overseas qualification, towards a New Zealand qualification
- offshore delivery of all or part of a New Zealand TEO's programme within an overseas provider's qualification
- distance or e-learning to small numbers of offshore students who enrol in programmes intended (and marketed) primarily for students living in New Zealand
- other education services, such as consultancy and research, that are provided offshore.

## 1. Applications for offshore delivery

There are two main scenarios requiring approval for offshore delivery. These are where:

- the tertiary education organisation already holds approval and is accredited to deliver a programme in New Zealand. In this case the application is for the special programme approval and accreditation criteria for offshore delivery
- a programme has not previously been approved for delivery in New Zealand, the tertiary education organisation needs to apply for both programme approval and accreditation as well as the special programme approval and accreditation criteria for offshore delivery.

This also applies where an offshore delivery partner will be used.

### ***Information to be included in the application***

The following information needs to be included in the application:

- Details of any approved and accredited programme that the offshore delivery application is based upon.

- A description of any changes made to the design and delivery of the approved programme to suit the offshore delivery context. This includes the effect of any changes made to the delivery that will affect learning outcomes, content, student workload and learner resources. The programme should be comparable rather than equivalent to the programme delivered in New Zealand. (Refer Rule 5.1) This acknowledges there will be differences in the offshore delivery context from that of New Zealand.
- Resources required to deliver the programme, including a recruitment and staffing plan.
- The language of delivery and assessment.
- Statements of acceptability to support offshore delivery of the programme from the qualification developer and relevant bodies and communities (e.g. academic bodies, employers, industry bodies, professional bodies).
- A description of how the TEO will demonstrate graduates of programmes leading to New Zealand qualifications at Level 1 – 6 will meet the requirements for assuring consistency.
- A description of the due diligence process used to determine the suitability of the offshore partner organisation.

### ***Submitting applications for offshore programme delivery***

Applicants must use the online application form and clearly indicate in the first section of the form that the application relates to offshore programme delivery.

***Information describing how the organisation meets Rule 4.2 (a) to (c) of the Offshore Programme Delivery Rules must be attached to the online application form.***

## **2. Using the evaluative approach**

The decision to approve a programme or to accredit a provider for offshore delivery, is based on the quality and sufficiency of evidence provided in an application. The application should meet criteria set out in the *Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2021*.

The evaluative methodology enables decisions about quality, value and importance to be reached on a consistent and reliable basis, and requires NZQA to:

- be explicit about the information and evidence on which judgements are made as well as the logic of its interpretation, and
- write the outcome in a clear, concise report which explains the key factors and reasons for the final decision.

### **2.1 Decision to approve a programme for offshore delivery**

The decision to approve a programme is made by ensuring the application meets the criteria and by answering the evaluation question:

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

NZQA reviews the information and evidence provided in the self-assessment report to determine how its learners will match the graduate outcomes of the qualification.

Rubric one (below) sets out the expected levels of performance in relation to the evaluation question for the programme to reach the decision.

“Good evidence” is:

- relevant to answering the evaluation question
- obtained from more than one source (i.e. is corroborated or triangulated)
- of more than one type (e.g. quantitative and qualitative data)
- making sense in the context of the question.

**Rubric one: Criteria for rating answers to the evaluation question to approve a programme for offshore delivery**

	Criteria
<p>Programme approved</p>	<p><b>ALL</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good evidence that the programme enables learners to achieve comparable qualification outcomes.</li> <li>• Good evidence the programme is made up of learning outcomes structured in a coherent way to achieve the qualification outcomes and addresses the relevant needs of learners.</li> <li>• Good evidence the programme is acceptable to the relevant communities and key stakeholders.</li> <li>• No significant gaps or weaknesses in the programme.</li> </ul>
<p>Programme not approved</p>	<p><b>ANY</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient evidence that the programme will enable graduates to meet the qualification outcomes.</li> <li>• Insufficient evidence the programme is structured in a coherent way to achieve the qualification outcomes and address the relevant needs of learners.</li> <li>• Insufficient evidence the programme is acceptable to the relevant communities and key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Significant gaps or weaknesses in the programme.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Decision to accredit an education provider for offshore delivery

A decision to accredit an education organisation is reached by ensuring that the application meets the criteria and by answering the evaluation question:

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

NZQA reviews information and evidence provided in the self-assessment report using rubric two.

Rubric two (below) sets out the expected levels of performance in relation to the evaluation question to decide whether to accredit the education organisation to deliver offshore.

### Rubric two: Criteria for rating the answers to the evaluation question to accredit an education provider to provide an approved programme for offshore delivery

	Criteria
Education organisation accredited	<p><b>ALL</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good evidence the education organisation has determined the capability and resources required to provide the programme offshore.</li> <li>• Good evidence that the education organisation can manage the impacts of any specific programme requirements in an offshore environment.</li> <li>• Good evidence of formal arrangements with the programme owner where this is required.</li> <li>• No significant gaps or weaknesses in the self-assessment report, and/or the</li> </ul>
Education organisation not accredited	<p><b>ANY</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient evidence the education organisation has determined the capability and resources required to provide the programme.</li> <li>• Insufficient evidence that the education organisation can manage the impacts of any specific programme requirements in an offshore environment.</li> <li>• Formal arrangements with the programme owner where these are required are insufficient to manage the provision of the programme.</li> </ul>

### 3. Criteria for approval for an offshore programme

Refer to Rule 5.1 of the *NZQF Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2021*.

#### **CRITERION 1**      *Programme design and delivery*

In developing a programme or adapting an already approved programme for offshore delivery a number of factors need to be considered. The programme needs to be 'comparable', rather than 'equivalent' to the programme delivered in New Zealand. This acknowledges there will be differences in the offshore delivery context from that of New Zealand. These include:

- outcomes, content and student workload must be comparable to those in New Zealand
- the curriculum and delivery approach need to meet the needs of offshore providers and learners. Where the same programme is delivered in New Zealand, employers and other stakeholders expect consistency between learning experiences and the curriculum used to deliver the programme
- teaching and learning resources and practical examples embedded in teaching materials need to suit the offshore culture
- the language of delivery and assessment must be specified
- the programme must clearly state if achievement of the relevant qualification leads to the graduates being eligible to obtain a professional registration or other licence in New Zealand.
- the graduates of the offshore programme achieve comparable outcomes to graduates from the equivalent New Zealand qualification.

Please note, applications for the approval of programmes that will only be delivered offshore do not need to provide evidence required under Rule 4.1 *Criteria 4 Acceptability of the programme and consultation* of the *NZQF Programme and Accreditation Rules 2021*.

### 4. Criteria for accreditation for an offshore programme

Refer to Rule 6.1 of the *NZQF Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2021*.

**Accreditation provides an assurance that the TEO can effectively deliver the programme offshore.**

Where there is an offshore partner, the New Zealand TEO is responsible for the actions and performance of the offshore partner in relation to the offshore programme delivery and must proactively monitor and report to NZQA on the quality of offshore programme delivery. This is to protect the reputation of New Zealand education and protect students from unfair outcomes.

#### **CRITERION 2**      *Offshore relationships*

To enable the successful delivery of an offshore programme, the New Zealand TEO must establish an effective working relationship with any offshore partners. It needs to do due diligence on the partner organisation and be confident in its integrity and capability.

Factors to consider before entering into a relationship with an offshore delivery partner include:

- formal legal status
- existing reputation, including compliance with laws in the host country
- education interests and objectives
- knowledge and experience in operating as an education provider
- academic quality, reputation and standing (in-country and internationally)
- existing offshore/cross-border partnerships
- business plans, structure, and ownership



- financial stability, strength, and probity
- management and administrative capabilities
- delivery site locations, and the quality of buildings and facilities.

### **CRITERION 3**      ***Formal agreement with offshore partner***

Contractual agreements will be dictated by the needs and characteristics of the partnership using a suitable format.

Contractual agreements should include, as appropriate:

- the names of the parties to the agreement
- allocation of responsibility for the management of quality systems to maintain standards
- procedures for resolving any differences that might arise between the parties to this agreement, including exit arrangements and contract default provisions
- procedures and responsibilities for securing approval and accreditation
- procedures and responsibilities in respect of the management of the programme, its ongoing monitoring of provision for the implementation of changes to the programme and/or unexpected programme closure
- assessment and moderation arrangements
- an indication of the wording that will appear on certificates awarded to learners who have met all requirements of the programme
- responsibility for all administrative arrangements such as student enrolment and welfare services, decisions relating to progress through the programme, assessment, appeals, reporting of student results, and remuneration of monitors and moderators
- financial aspects of the contract
- any potential conflicts of interest
- privacy/confidentiality arrangements.

### **CRITERION 4**      ***Resources***

An explanation of how the appropriate resources will be made available to ensure that teaching and learning experiences are comparable to those of learners in New Zealand.

### **CRITERION 5**      ***Assessment and moderation***

An explanation of how the assessment process and tools will be developed or modified to meet the needs of the learners and their context.

This includes the management of pre- and post- assessment moderation and establishing equivalence to the standard achieved by learners in New Zealand where this is relevant.

The New Zealand TEO is accountable for the quality of learner assessment, including where an offshore partner administers the assessments.

Special attention should be given to academic security issues such as plagiarism, as these can be more difficult to resolve in offshore delivery.

### **CRITERION 6**      ***Academic and other staff***

The New Zealand TEO awarding the qualification is accountable for the quality of academic and administrative staff delivering its programmes. Policies and procedures must be suitable and include conditions for staff operating in the offshore country.

The application should include evidence of a recruitment plan, curriculum vitae or position descriptions for the offshore delivery teaching staff, and a description of systems to manage and support offshore

staff.

### **CRITERION 7      *Student support and complaints***

The application should include evidence of student and academic support services and complaints procedures, and how these will be communicated to staff and students.

The support systems provided to offshore students should be consistent with their cultural context and modes of learning, and address issues and/or difficulties they may experience.

Student rights are likely to differ from those that apply in New Zealand. In some cultures, it may not be appropriate for students to complain about the delivery of a programme or its academic staff.

### **CRITERION 8      *Student information***

The application should include an example of information to be made available to learners.

It will include an overview of approaches to student recruitment and programme marketing information.

It should explain how the approach to recruitment and marketing has been adapted for offshore delivery.

### **CRITERION 9      *Fee refunds and closures***

New Zealand TEOs may not be the responsible partner for development of fee refund provisions but they should ensure that contractual and other agreements include fee refund provisions that are comparable to provisions for onshore programmes.

Evidence of how fee refund provisions have been incorporated in agreements with offshore partners needs to be included.

### **CRITERION 10    *Quality assurance and management***

The application demonstrates how the New Zealand TEO's quality assurance and quality management system (QMS) requirements will be adapted and applied to offshore delivery. It will also explain how any relevant requirements in the country of delivery have been integrated into the QMS.

The effectiveness of offshore delivery must be included and reported to NZQA in the organisation's self-assessment.

## **5. Requirements to maintain approval and accreditation**

### ***Programme review***

The New Zealand TEO should ensure that regular reviews of the programme and its offshore delivery are integrated into the organisation's ongoing self-assessment and that the results of the self-assessment are used to improve offshore delivery.

### ***Learner records***

TEOs must maintain permanent and accurate student enrolment and achievement records.

Where student records are held offshore by a partner organisation, the TEO must ensure the security of records and the ability to access them from New Zealand.

**On-site external quality assurance of offshore delivery will be undertaken within two years of commencement of delivery when the offshore delivery is in a language other than English.**

**The TEO is responsible for providing translated materials and interpreters as necessary.**

**The quality assurance site visit would be at the expense of the TEO.**