Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Qualification Title: New Zealand Certificate in Computing (Intermediate User) (Level 3)

Qualification number: 2592

Date of review: 4 March 2024

This report refers to graduates awarded this qualification between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2023.

Final decision on consistency of the qualification: National consistency is confirmed

Threshold:

The stated purpose of this qualification is to provide Aotearoa New Zealand organisations and communities with graduates who have intermediate level computing skills and can be employed in a range of roles. However, some providers are also using the qualification very successfully as a foundation level qualification that enables graduates to pathway into higher level study.

The threshold to determine sufficiency with the graduate profile, for version 1 of the qualification, was determined as evidence of graduates being able to:

- use a wide range of features, functions and settings of common digital devices, software and techniques to search, combine and manipulate data to create, access, organise, present and store information and data
- investigate, plan, design and create solutions to meet the requirements of a specified brief
- identify risks and meet compliance requirements when using digital tools and digitally stored and transmitted information, and explain procedures and implement solutions to meet security requirements in an organisation context
- consistently apply appropriate ethics, standards, principles and practices to comply with legal and organisational requirements
- apply communication principles to effectively collaborate with others in a digital environment
- use a variety of digital devices to transfer data across multiple platforms
- trouble-shoot and fix a range of common hardware and software problems.

The threshold to determine sufficiency with the graduate profile for version 2 of the qualification was determined as evidence of graduates being able to:

- use a wide range of features, functions and settings of digital devices, software and techniques to search, access, create, combine, manipulate, store and share data, and explore current and emerging trends in the use of digital tools

- investigate, plan, consult, design and develop integrated solution(s) to meet the requirements of a specified brief
- identify risks and consistently apply appropriate ethics and practices when using digital tools and digitally stored and transmitted information to securely and legally operate in a digital environment
- collaborate and communicate effectively with others in a range of formal and informal digital environments, using appropriate communication principles, etiquette and tools,
- manage own learning and work effectively in a digital context
- use problem solving techniques to trouble-shoot, fix or escalate a range of common hardware and software problems by selecting from known solutions

Both threshold statements are the GPOs for the respective versions of the qualification.

Education Organisations with sufficient evidence

The following education organisations have been found to have sufficient evidence.

MOE Number	Education Organisation	Final rating
7391	EmployNZ	Sufficient
6683	Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology trading as Ara Institute of Canterbury (6006)	Sufficient
9964	People Potential Limited	Sufficient
6683	Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology trading as The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (6022)	Sufficient
6683	Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology trading as Eastern Institute of Technology (6007)	Sufficient
6683	Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology trading as Wintec (6019)	Sufficient
6683	Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology trading as Otago Polytechnic (6013)	Sufficient
9840	Regent Training Centre Limited	Sufficient
6683	Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology) trading as Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (6022) Representing the former eCampus graduates from their former partners: Ara (6006) EIT (6007) NMIT (6011) NorthTec (6012)	Sufficient

	Otago Polytechnic (6013) Toi Ohomai (6025) UCOL (6009)	

Introduction

This 60-credit, Level 3 qualification is delivered as a face-to-face programme, via supported on-line study, or by blended delivery by different providers. Over the period of review there has been a total of 584 graduates, 72 of whom have completed version 2.

Providers offer this qualification for different primary reasons. In some cases, it is offered almost exclusively as a foundation pathway to further study. In contrast, many students with providers offering an on-line option are taking the qualification to enhance their computer skills for their existing employment or to support their communities. There was little evidence offered by providers that graduates are gaining entry level positions in IT as a result of completing this qualification. However, for some graduates this is their first formal qualification, and it does enhance their general employment opportunities.

Programme design varies considerably as providers have carefully sought to meet the differing needs of their diverse learners. Some programmes are unit standards based; others offer the programme with achievement-based assessment. Many providers take an integrative, project-based approach to ensure that learning is based in a real-world context. Literacy and numeracy support is provided as required and some programmes are explicitly framed in a Kaupapa Māori context.

Most providers moved to version 2 of this qualification in 2023. The qualification is due for review in 2025 and consultations will commence later this year.

The previous consistency review for this qualification, was undertaken in 2019 (for graduates up to 31 December 2018). National consistency was confirmed at that time, although a range of weaknesses in evidence were identified in that review.

Evidence

The education organisations provided a range of evidence to demonstrate that their graduates met the graduate profile outcomes.

The criteria used to judge the evaluation question were:

- the nature, quality and integrity of the evidence presented by the education organisation
- how well the organisation has analysed, interpreted, and validated the evidence, and used the understanding gained to achieve actual or improved consistency
- the extent to which the education organisation can reasonably justify and validate claims, and statements relating to the consistency of graduate outcomes, including in relation to other providers of programmes leading to the qualification.

Evidence included:

- mapping of unit standards within programme components to the GPOs

- details of internal and external moderation
- feedback from graduates
- graduate destination data
- feedback from next-level tutors
- some feedback from employers.

How well does the self-assessment and supporting evidence provided by the education organisation demonstrate that its graduates match the graduate outcomes at the appropriate threshold?

It was clear that all providers are committed to delivering programmes of study that engage and support learners wishing to gain this qualification. Innovative approaches are carefully evaluated and there is, for most providers, an evident ethos of systematic and effective continuous improvement.

However, in terms of evidence for consistency of graduate outcomes, the portfolios were varied in terms of both the strength of evidence provided and the level of self-assessment. Some were highly convincing, while others were using methodologies clearly not framed in the context of the diverse motivations of learners undertaking this qualification. In the latter cases, this meant that data was often piecemeal, and the self-assessment limited. In some instances, suggestions or planned actions identified in the previous review to improve the quality of evidence, had not been fully implemented. This was a missed opportunity.

As a result of this review process, those providers with weaknesses or lack of coherence in their evidence have recognised these issues and have signalled their intention to work towards improvements in evidence collection in the future.

Special Focus (includes special focus on a strand or outcome)

There was a focus on evidence for how graduates met the GPOs of the original and subsequent version of the qualification, although the evidence for graduates from version 2 in most instances is limited at this stage.

Examples of good practice

- some providers clearly took a real and systematic interest in the subsequent progress of their graduates as they developed their careers
- graduate feedback is actively considered in programme review
- some providers offered strong evidence about how their programmes addressed the conditions for the qualification
- one provider made expectations of subsequent employer / next level tutor follow-up clear to learners at enrolment and gained their prior permission for such follow-up at that time. Their graduates understood that this was intended as an evaluation of the value of the qualification, not of individual graduates.

Issues and concerns

Some providers have very low qualification completion rates. In some cases, there is evidence that this is being actively monitored and addressed; in other cases, this is less clear.

Some providers' survey instruments do not differentiate between primary modes of study. It is important that providers have a good understanding of the efficacy of programmes delivered primarily on-line in terms of achieving consistency of graduate outcomes. There is also a general concern that institutional surveys do not always effectively address the needs of consistency reviews, requiring teaching teams to undertake supplementary surveys.

Recommendations to Qualification Developer

There were some good discussions with representatives from Toi Mai Workforce Development Council about the review of this qualification, and other computing qualifications, later in the year. It was acknowledged that qualifications at level 2 and 3 serve a range of different purposes. For some graduates, they become part of a pathway to higher level qualifications in IT and, for others, serve as a pathway to employment. For many learners this is an opportunity for professional development in employment areas where good computer skills are an advantage, but not necessarily central. In this context, it was pointed out that, as this and the level 2 qualification cover skills and understanding that many people in employment may benefit from in their day-to-day roles, there may be scope for the development of micro-credentials. It was considered important that any developments at level 2, in particular, were not overly technical and focused on the needs of users.

It was noted that there was a particular overlap with qualifications in business administration which is in the purview of the Ringa Hora Workforce Development Council and there will be a need to liaise with them in the upcoming reviews.

It was acknowledged that, when unit standards are revised or skills standards developed, they need to be sufficiently flexible to allow providers to keep up with changing technologies.