



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS

AUTHORITY



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

— Introducing the New Zealand  
Qualifications Authority



## Who are we?

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) seeks to ensure that New Zealand qualifications are accepted as credible and robust, nationally and internationally.

## What do we do?

Our roles span the secondary and tertiary education sectors. NZQA administers the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs) for **senior secondary school students**. NZQA is responsible for the quality assurance of most **tertiary training providers** (including polytechnics, wānanga, government and private training establishments). In the case of universities, the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee is the body responsible for quality assurance.

Some of the things we are responsible for include:

- Maintaining a database of all New Zealand qualifications, the **New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications** (the Register).
- Managing New Zealand's **National Qualifications Framework**, a subset of the Register, that contains all *national* qualifications.
- Maintaining students' **Record of Achievement**, a lifelong record of all standards and qualifications achieved from the National Qualifications Framework.
- Developing and maintaining some of the qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework.
- Assessing overseas qualifications for immigrants and working with other governments to achieve international recognition of New Zealand's qualifications.
- Running secondary school examinations, including NCEAs and New Zealand Scholarship.

## Planning and staff

NZQA prepares an annual Statement of Intent. This sets out our goals, plans and budgets. You can download a copy from <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about/strategic.html>

Within NZQA, we strive for operational excellence and clarity of purpose. We're continuously working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of business

operations, responsiveness to clients, and the sustainability of the way we use our resources.

NZQA has a team of 399 (full-time equivalent) staff.<sup>1</sup> Most of our employees are located in our Wellington office, though a small number work regionally throughout the country, or from our Auckland office.

1 As at April 2009

## How do New Zealand qualifications work?

To appear on New Zealand's Register of Quality Assured Qualifications, qualifications must be approved and quality assured, and delivered by an accredited education or training organisation.

There are two types of qualifications in New Zealand:

- National qualifications provide nationally recognised, consistent standards and qualifications. They give recognition and credit for standards-based knowledge and skills.
- Provider-developed (local) qualifications are those which have been developed by an education provider.

The primary responsibility for the quality of education delivered rests with the organisation that provides those services. However, quality assurance processes are in place to ensure government and individuals are investing time and money in quality education and training.

National qualifications are approved and quality assured by NZQA. Provider-developed qualifications are approved by NZQA and other

quality assurance bodies. Quality assurance for polytechnics is done by the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (under delegation from NZQA) and for universities by the Vice-Chancellors' Committee.

The most widely delivered of the more than 1000 national qualifications are the senior secondary school qualifications, the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs). NCEAs are based on national standards, which describe particular skills or knowledge. Each standard is worth a number of credits. Generally, a traditional school subject, like English, Science or Maths, is divided into five to seven standards. Qualifications are gained by building up credits, awarded for each standard achieved.

Some standards are assessed internally in schools by teachers. In this case, NZQA moderates a selection of the assessments to make sure there is national consistency.

Other standards are assessed externally, primarily through nationwide examinations which are sat at the end of the year by students in schools across the country. NZQA administers the entire examination and results process.

## How do qualification levels work?

There are ten levels of qualifications on the Register.

Levels depend on the complexity of learning – 1 is the least complex and 10 the most.

They reflect the content and outcomes of the qualification, not the number of years spent learning. Levels 1–3 are broadly

comparable to senior secondary education and basic trades training, levels 4–6 to advanced trades, technical and business qualifications, and levels 7 and above are for advanced qualifications of graduate and postgraduate standard.

**The Register is available online at [www.kiwiquals.govt.nz](http://www.kiwiquals.govt.nz).**

### Qualification Levels

Level	Naming sequence
10	Doctorates
9	Masters Degrees
8	Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Bachelors Degrees with Honours
7	Bachelors Degrees, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
6	Diplomas
5	
4	Certificates
3	
2	
1	

### International work

We provide a **qualifications recognition service** for immigrants to compare qualifications gained outside New Zealand with qualifications on the Register. We also work with other governments to establish the comparability of our qualifications and the recognition of New Zealand qualifications overseas.

Among our international agreements, the government has acceded to the Lisbon Convention, which through the Bologna process is working towards compatibility of qualifications across Europe. The New Zealand-China Free Trade Agreement was signed in 2008 and recognises New Zealand as an important provider of quality education.

### Māori<sup>2</sup> education

We are playing our part to support increased Māori participation and successful achievement in education. *Te Rautaki Māori*, our Māori Strategy, is our guide. Our role in this area includes working with Māori stakeholders, ensuring our processes incorporate recognition of Māori world views and methodologies and developing and maintaining national standards and qualifications based on Māori knowledge and skills.

### Pasifika<sup>3</sup> education

In 2009 we introduced our first Pasifika Strategy. The Strategy provides a direction and plan for NZQA's role in supporting Pasifika education.

<sup>2</sup> New Zealand's indigenous people

<sup>3</sup> New Zealanders who identify with one or more Pacific Island ethnicity



*Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, kā ora ai te iwi.*  
*With my basket, and your basket, together the*  
*people will grow.* MĀORI WHAKATAUKI / PROVERB

## What are our goals?

To fulfil our role and help achieve government and education sector plans, we have set the following goals to ensure we are:

- 1 applying a robust quality assurance framework in the tertiary education sector through ongoing self-assessment by tertiary providers and periodic external evaluation and review
- 2 further developing the Register of New Zealand Quality Assured Qualifications and the National Qualifications Framework, to improve their usefulness and ease of understanding to learners, employers and providers
- 3 supporting increased Māori educational achievement through the implementation of *Te Rautaki Māori* (NZQA's Māori Strategy)
- 4 enhancing the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) to contribute to lifting educational standards and integrating NCEA with other National Qualifications Framework qualifications more effectively, so that all students leave school with worthwhile qualifications
- 5 increasing understanding, comparability and recognition of New Zealand qualifications in key education and immigration partner countries.
- 6 achieving operational excellence.



NEW ZEALAND **QUALIFICATIONS** AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

For more  
information contact:

 125 The Terrace  
PO Box 160  
Wellington 6140  
New Zealand  
Telephone: 64 4 463 3000  
Facsimile: 64 4 463 3112  
[helpdesk@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:helpdesk@nzqa.govt.nz)  
[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)

Published June 2009

New Zealand Government