Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

NZQA

NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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

Enhancing mobility

Referencing of the Australian and New Zealand Qualifications Frameworks

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Foreword

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority are delighted to release this report on referencing of the Australian and New Zealand qualifications frameworks.

Qualifications frameworks are an important component of Australia and New Zealand's respective national quality assurance arrangements. Both countries are viewed as world-leading in the development and implementation of national qualifications frameworks, having two of the longest standing qualifications frameworks. The maturity and level of sophistication in our frameworks reflect that they have evolved over time to respond to the changing needs of the sector, and of government, and importantly the global trends in education. What we learned from each other through the referencing process helps us to better understand our frameworks when examined with an international lens and different world view. This in turn strengthens the value of our contributions to developing regional qualifications frameworks or assisting another nation to implement a new national qualifications framework.

The project work and final report is quite significant in a number of ways. For Australia, it is our first formal referencing project. Being the first has meant we have learnt a lot from our more experienced New Zealand colleagues and our consultations with the full range of interested parties. It was particularly pleasing to have had the involvement of our two national regulators, the Australian Skills Quality Authority and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

For New Zealand, this is the first formal referencing project of all levels of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. We have learned that each referencing project is unique and needs to be tailored to suit the systems of the participating countries. We have particularly enjoyed working alongside our Australian colleagues. The collegiality, along with the robust processes we have used for referencing, has established a zone of trust between the qualifications frameworks of our two countries. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of Universities New Zealand, the quality assurance body for the university sector, and thank our colleagues in the wider education sector for their advice and guidance throughout the project.

Australia and New Zealand welcome the important people-to-people links that result from our shared engagement in international education and the building of mutual understanding. The referencing work has underlined to all involved that it is important to remember that there will be specific cultural, political and historical contexts as to how our education systems have evolved and why there may be different emphases on facets of our respective frameworks. That said, there is also a depth and breadth of commonality in our systems, which reflects shared histories and regional ties in our cultural, trade and economic relationships.

There has been extensive and ongoing collaboration between the Department and NZQA since beginning this project in early 2014. We understand from all those involved that the learning journey has been, and will continue to be, extremely valuable in building knowledge and understanding of how our respective education systems work, especially the robustness of our quality assurance. But more importantly, it has been fundamental in creating longstanding people-to-people relationships that will make working together in future easier and enjoyable.

Lisa Paul AO PSM
Secretary
Australian Government
Department of
Education and Training

Dr Karen Poutasi
Chief Executive
New Zealand
Qualifications Authority

1. Executive Summary

Purpose

This report sets out the findings of the joint project undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to reference the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

Referencing is a process that results in the establishment of a relationship between the levels of national qualifications frameworks and the robustness of the quality assurance systems that underpin the education and training systems. Referencing seeks to make a statement about the broad compatibility of qualifications frameworks, without adjustments to either of the qualifications frameworks being made. This report therefore sets out the comparability of the levels of the national qualifications frameworks of Australia and New Zealand.

Policy dialogues that address strategic matters such as this referencing project reinforce bilateral and multilateral cooperation from administrative to policy levels and serve to enhance shared understanding of the education and training policies and developments in both countries. The Australian and New Zealand Governments support referencing the AQF and the NZQF. Referencing will help advance a Single Economic Market between Australia and New Zealand and support the mobility of learners and skilled labour between the two countries.

This report will build an understanding of New Zealand qualifications in Australia and Australian qualifications in New Zealand. Referencing facilitates transparency and provides reliable information on the comparability of the national frameworks in both countries, validating the credibility and robustness of each countries' qualification systems, including knowledge and understanding of the various quality assurance processes supporting the qualifications frameworks. Referencing provides a systematic basis for improving mutual trust and understanding of recognition of qualifications, supporting the ability of employers, educational institutions and other stakeholders to make judgements about the value and comparability of particular qualifications in practice.

Scope

The report will support transparent and consistent recognition decisions informed by a strong understanding and appreciation of the learning outcomes delivered by the frameworks.

Although the outcomes of the referencing process do not entitle any holder of an Australian or New Zealand qualification to claim automatic recognition, they will supplement the existing body of knowledge acquired over the many years of student and labour mobility between Australia and New Zealand.

Approach

A Joint Working Group of Department of Education and Training and NZQA officials was formed to undertake the project, and international experts were engaged to provide insight and advice as the referencing project progressed. Consultations were undertaken to involve stakeholders in both countries to ensure a robust and transparent referencing process that would be of value to all parts of the sector.

The methodology for referencing the AQF and NZQF used the following set of defined principles, adapted from the *Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications levels to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)*[1]:

1. **Relevant bodies involved:** the legitimacy and responsibilities of all relevant New Zealand and Australian bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and transparent.
2. **Quality assurance systems:** the New Zealand and Australian quality assurance systems for education and training are integral to the qualifications framework and are consistent with international quality assurance principles.
3. **Qualification level linkages:** there is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels of the NZQF and the AQF.
4. **Comparable principles of learning outcomes:** the NZQF and the qualifications listed on it and the AQF and its qualifications are based on comparable principles and objectives of learning outcomes.
5. **Transparency regarding qualifications:** the procedures for inclusion of qualifications on the NZQF and the AQF and/or describing the place of qualifications in the qualifications system are transparent.
6. **Validation of credit systems:** national or regional policies for the validation of all learning, and credit systems, where these exist, are an integral component of the NZQF and the AQF.
7. **Consultation with quality assurance agencies:** the referencing report has been prepared in consultation with the relevant accrediting and/or quality assurance bodies for New Zealand and Australia.
8. **International experts:** the referencing process involves international experts to support and assist the development of trusted outcomes.

Referencing Summary

The Department of Education and Training and NZQA were the two agencies mandated as the competent authorities to undertake the project, and both countries benefited from consultation and involvement of the relevant accrediting/quality assurance bodies and international experts as discussed in Principles 1, 7 and 8.

Both countries operate national quality assurance systems that are similarly robust, providing public confidence in qualifications. These quality assurance systems, (discussed in Principle 2) of which qualifications frameworks are fundamental, are based on set criteria which are consistent with relevant international good practice. Both countries' qualifications frameworks are underpinned by national registration of institutions by external monitoring bodies, and national accreditation of courses/programmes based on robust and measurable

1 The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Advisory Group agreed on a set of criteria and procedures to guide the process for European Union countries to reference to the EQF. The criteria ensure that the referencing process can be understood and trusted by stakeholders in all countries involved.

criteria. An integral aspect of both systems is the requirement for internal management of quality assurance and continuous improvement by education and training institutions, with requirements for self-assessment and external review. The quality assurance systems cover all modes of delivery, including online, distance, domestic and transnational delivery, providing confidence in qualifications.

Both frameworks are based on comparable principles and objectives of learning outcomes, as discussed in Principle 4. They both describe learning outcomes with similar emphases on knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills. The learning outcomes are expressed objectively, avoiding reference to learning modes or institutional settings, are neutral in relation to specific occupational relevance and to 'fields of learning', and are expressed generically for qualification types/framework levels.

With transparent procedures relating to describing the placement of qualifications in the qualification systems, and policies for the validation of all learning and credit systems, both countries' frameworks compare well for Principles 5 and 6.

One notable difference between the qualifications frameworks is that the NZQF is a unified framework with a dual purpose: to set out the architecture of the New Zealand qualifications system, and to act as the single repository for all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand. The AQF is also a unified framework with qualification types at each level, but it is not an accredited qualification repository. The Australian national education regulatory bodies maintain national registers of accredited qualifications for regulatory purposes.

A comparative process for matching the levels of the national qualifications frameworks was used to determine the comparability of the AQF and the NZQF. This involved:

- structural comparison of the two frameworks i.e. comparing the architecture and policy of the two frameworks, the concepts of learning outcomes on which they are based and the way the levels are defined
- technical comparison of the two frameworks i.e. expected learning outcomes – knowledge, skills and application, credit allocations and framework levels
- contextual matching i.e. qualifications type, definition and purpose, delivery arrangements, assessment methods, volume of learning, credit
- social effects matching i.e. how qualifications are viewed in society, what are the destinations of those graduating

For most levels, the structural and technical comparison informed an appropriate reference, but for some levels, further research was required to make a more robust and comprehensive comparison. The contextual and social effects matching process was then used to deepen comparison.

These additional concepts were also considered before final judgements of comparability were made. These included analysis of best fit and substantial difference.

Outcomes of referencing process

Following analysis of each referencing principle, the Australian and New Zealand qualifications frameworks were judged to be compatible, as set out by the principles in Chapter 6 of the Report. As detailed in the discussion around Principle 3, the levels in the AQF and NZQF were judged to be comparable as outlined in the following table.

AQF	NZQF
Level 1	Level 1
Level 2	Level 2
Level 3	Level 3
Level 4	Level 4
Level 5	Level 5
Level 6	Level 6
Level 7	Level 7
Level 8	Level 8
Level 9	Level 9
Level 10	Level 10

Both Australia and New Zealand have had national qualifications frameworks in place for over 20 years, and this referencing report begins the process of linking frameworks with other national qualifications frameworks in a global setting.

2. Acronyms

AQA	Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority (Australia)
CER	Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CUAP	Committee on University Academic Programmes (New Zealand)
EER	External Evaluation and Review
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ITOs	Industry Training Organisations (New Zealand)
ITPs	Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (New Zealand)
JWG	Joint Working Group
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
PTEs	Private Training Establishments (New Zealand)
RTOs	Registered Training Organisations (Australia)
TEOs	Tertiary Education Organisations (New Zealand)
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Australia)
TTMRA	Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement
VET	Vocational Education and Training

3. Context

In February 2014, Prime Ministers the Hon Tony Abbott and the Rt Hon John Key welcomed work to align the Australian and New Zealand qualifications frameworks in a Joint Statement.

This project aligns with the New Zealand Government's vision of developing and sustaining mutually beneficial education relationships with key partner countries. This is a leading part of NZInc strategies in the Pacific over the next 15 years. The project supports Australia's goal of enhancing the understanding of Australia's qualifications internationally to support meaningful and sustainable education cooperation and improve student and labour mobility.

The project also sits in the context of, and complements, two key agreements between Australia and New Zealand:

- The **Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (CER)** is based on a comprehensive set of arrangements, which underpin substantial flows of trade, services, investment, labour, and visitors between the countries. The CER came into force on 1 January 1983. The principal elements of the CER are:
  - free trade in goods
  - free trade in services
  - free labour market
  - mutual recognition of goods and occupations
- The **Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement (TTMRA)** is a non-treaty arrangement between New Zealand and Australia, under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997. It is the cornerstone of a single economic market, and a powerful driver of regulatory coordination and economic integration, as envisioned by the Australia and New Zealand CER Trade Agreement. Under the TTMRA, people registered to practice an occupation in one country are entitled to register to practice in the other. The TTMRA came into force on 1 May 1998.

Growth of national qualifications internationally

About 160 countries have National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and almost all of these have been developed in the last 5 years. Australia and New Zealand were pioneer countries and developed their NQFs in 1995 and 1991 respectively, making them among the first NQFs in the world. NQFs are designed for many purposes but mostly they are designed to clarify the map of qualifications in a country for its citizens—the hierarchy, the links between them and pathways for learners. However, these powerful descriptions of qualifications systems are also outward looking and are attractive to people in other countries as a quick reference to qualifications in countries with NQFs. They are bridges between countries and people can draw rough conclusions when comparing qualifications across borders.

Individual qualifications recognition

Individuals seek qualifications recognition for a variety of purposes including admission to further study, occupational registration/licencing, employment and migration. This is carried out by the competent authorities in Australia and New Zealand. This referencing project focuses on the comparability of the level outcomes in the two qualifications frameworks, but makes no judgement about the comparability of individual qualifications within those frameworks.

This report therefore supplements information available to recognition authorities and is not intended to replace processes for assessing an individual's qualification for study, migration or employment, which usually involves a more specific benchmark than a qualifications framework.

4. Background

The Department of Education and Training (through the former Australian Qualifications Framework Council), and the NZQA, agreed in October 2013 to commence referencing of the AQF and NZQF.

The relationship between Australia and New Zealand is underpinned by shared values, historical and institutional linkages, and substantial people-to-people connections. Australia is New Zealand's most valuable trade and investment partner, and its main ally. Australia will continue to be critical to New Zealand's future prosperity and security.

Citizens of both countries move freely across the Tasman to seek opportunities and create wealth. Over 500,000 New Zealanders live in Australia and 60,000 Australians live in New Zealand.

Australia and New Zealand maintain close political contact. At a government-to-government level, Australia's relationship with New Zealand is the closest and most comprehensive of all its bilateral relationships. New Zealand ministers and senior officials participate, with their Australian federal and state counterparts, in many of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meetings which span the Australian domestic policy agenda.

In recent years, both governments have stated the importance of the relationship and their intention to strengthen links further, especially through deeper economic integration.

Referencing the AQF and the NZQF is one way to strengthen the relationship between Australia and New Zealand and is made easier by:

- the similarities in education and training systems, which both include long standing quality assurance systems
- New Zealand's established precedents for referencing the NZQF against other national qualifications frameworks
- the maintenance of close government-to-government diplomatic and trade relations.

5. Approach

A Joint Working Group (JWG) was formed and agreed a Project Brief which included the Terms of Reference for the JWG and the process for working together.

The methodology for referencing the NZQF and AQF used the following principles adapted from the *Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications levels to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)*:

1. **Relevant bodies involved:** the legitimacy and responsibilities of all relevant New Zealand and Australian bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and transparent.
2. **Quality assurance systems:** the New Zealand and Australian quality assurance systems for education and training are integral to the qualifications framework and are consistent with international quality assurance principles.
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7. **Consultation with quality assurance agencies:** the referencing report has been prepared in consultation with the relevant accrediting and/or quality assurance bodies for New Zealand and Australia.
8. **International experts:** the referencing process involves international experts to support and assist the development of trusted outcomes.

5.1 International experts

Dr Michael Coles, Consultant International and Qualifications Systems, United Kingdom acted as New Zealand's international expert for this project because of his extensive experience in analysis, design and evaluation of national and international qualifications systems and frameworks.

Associate Academic Vice-President Andrea Hope, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, agreed to take the part of Australia's international expert. She brought to the project extensive experience in the education and training sectors of Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and France. She has also worked with development of the qualifications frameworks in Hong Kong and the Commonwealth of Learning Transnational Qualifications Framework for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

The international experts provided insight and advice on the project from an international perspective including referencing of the levels of the NZQF and AQF and the report which addresses the criteria for the project.

5.2 Consultation process

Consultation and involvement of stakeholders at all stages of the project was seen to be a critical element by both New Zealand and Australia, providing a robust, transparent and defensible referencing process and ensuring the referencing report would be of value and useful to all parts of the sector. Both countries established national consultation groups and processes for wider consultation.

Australia

In undertaking the referencing process, the Department of Education and Training was responsible for consulting widely with stakeholders and users of the AQF. Of particular importance were the national regulators for higher education and vocational education and training, bodies with responsibility for qualifications recognition policy, and potential users of the referencing outcomes.

Australian stakeholders were consulted on the project and preliminary outcomes during September 2014. Preliminary investigation indicated that stakeholders strongly supported referencing of the two frameworks. As a result a short consultation paper was developed, and widely distributed amongst the entire spectrum of stakeholder groups and posted on the AQF website inviting public comment. Stakeholders were invited to respond to the issues and as well to make any other relevant comments. The stakeholder categories consulted comprised:

- Universities
- Vocational education and training (VET) providers
- Universities Australia
- Higher education providers and their representative bodies
- Industry Skills Councils
- Professional agencies including professional accrediting bodies
- Student organisations
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- Peak business, employer and industry bodies
- Trade unions.

While a comparatively small number of responses were received, the respondents were representative of the broad range of AQF stakeholders. All responses strongly supported the referencing of the AQF with the NZQF.

New Zealand

Participants were genuinely pleased to have representatives from NZQA engaging with them on the project.

New Zealand engaged with the wider sector through the New Zealand Advisory Group Members. Members covered the education sector, social and economic partners and government agencies as set out below:

- Universities New Zealand — Te Pōkai Tara
- New Zealand Institute of Technology and Polytechnics
- The Metro Group
- Te Tauihu o Ngā Wānanga
- Independent Tertiary New Zealand
- Secondary Principals' Association
- Business New Zealand
- New Zealand Council of Trade Unions
- Industry Training Federation
- New Zealand Students Union
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Education New Zealand
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

NZQA met with this group in April, May, August and November 2014.

The international expert advised NZQA that a focus group might be useful for looking at the lower levels of the AQF and the NZQF. A focus group was formed and met on 15 August 2014. Attendees included representatives from:

- schools
- the vocational sector
- industry
- higher education.

Representatives from these groups encouraged NZQA to attend peak body[2] forums to discuss the referencing project in more detail and to meet with interested institutions. Initial engagement occurred throughout September and October 2014 with:

- Private Training Establishments peak body forum
- Institute of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) peak body forum
- Industry Training Organisations peak body forum
- all eight New Zealand Universities – Auckland, Auckland University of Technology, Waikato, Massey, Victoria, Canterbury, Lincoln and Otago
- individual ITPs.

2 Peak bodies are national sectoral groups in the New Zealand education sector.

Representatives from these institutions included Deputy Vice Chancellors Academic, Academic Managers, Academic Directors, Deans of Graduate Studies, Academic Policy and Regulations staff members, and Heads of Departments.

Initial engagement concentrated on comparing the levels of the two frameworks. Engagement with the sector was very positive. Stakeholders fully supported referencing between the New Zealand and Australian frameworks.

NZQA consulted on the project for six weeks throughout February and March 2015. Results reflected that stakeholders were supportive of the project and agreed with the levelling of the frameworks.

6. Principles for referencing

Principle 1:

The legitimacy and responsibilities of all relevant New Zealand and Australian bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and transparent:

Responses to this principle clearly identify the organisations and agencies responsible for, and their authority for, the development and implementation of the qualifications framework.

Legitimate governance is established.

Both the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority are the bodies responsible for the Australian Qualifications Framework and the New Zealand Qualifications Framework respectively, having a clear mandate to develop and maintain their respective national qualifications framework.

The legitimacy and responsibilities of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority are clearly determined and transparent. The two agencies are mandated as the competent authorities to decide on the comparability of qualifications from other countries and systems to their own qualifications frameworks. The Australian Government Department of Education and Training and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority are both national information centres under the UNESCO/Council of Europe Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (also known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention).

New Zealand

A key function of NZQA is to set the overarching statutory rules for the quality assurance of qualifications and the tertiary education organisations that provide them (section 253 of the *Education Act 1989*). To implement these rules, New Zealand has two quality assurance agencies with responsibilities for separate parts of the tertiary education sector (section 159AD of the Education Act 1989):

- NZQA maintains and quality assures New Zealand's qualifications system for the non-university tertiary education sector
- Universities New Zealand fulfils this function for the university sector.

Under the *Education Act 1989* Universities New Zealand has delegated authority for university programme approval, accreditation, listing of university qualifications on the NZQF, training scheme approval, and ancillary powers under Section 253A of the Act.

NZQA and the New Zealand Qualifications Framework

NZQA is the body responsible for the development and maintenance of the NZQF and the related, Directory of Assessment Standards.

The NZQF was established in July 2010 as a single unified framework for all New Zealand qualifications. It replaced the National Qualifications Framework and the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications (the Register).

The *Education Amendment Act 2011* established the NZQF and the Directory of Assessment Standards in law, replacing general references to a 'qualifications framework'.

NZQA's other responsibilities

NZQA is designated as New Zealand's national information centre under the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (also known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention).

NZQA is also responsible for maintaining effective relationships with overseas certifying and validating bodies. This work allows NZQA to recognise overseas educational and vocational qualifications in New Zealand and have New Zealand educational and vocational qualifications recognised by other countries (see s246A(h) of the *Education Act 1989*).

NZQA administers the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students*, which provides a framework for service delivery by education providers and their agents to international students.

NZQA has some responsibility for secondary schools, but the Education Review Office evaluates and reports on the education and care of students in early childhood services, and primary and secondary schools.

NZQA's governance structure

NZQA has an independent Board of Directors that are appointed by the relevant Minister of the Crown. The Board members are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds. They all bring diverse and valuable experience to the role.

The NZQA Board ensures that NZQA carries out its legislative functions effectively and efficiently, fulfilling NZQA's mandate to create and run a robust qualifications system in New Zealand.

NZQA honours the Treaty of Waitangi

As a Crown entity, NZQA actively upholds the principles and spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi is a founding document of New Zealand which establishes the relationship between the Crown and Māori and recognises Māori as tangata whenua (indigenous peoples) of New Zealand. The Treaty protects Māori knowledge and skills (mātauranga Māori) as a national taonga (treasure) and ensures that Māori have full and equal participation in society as Māori, including education.

NZQA has an Office of the Deputy Chief Executive Māori, which provides cultural advice and services to NZQA, and has a strategy for raising the achievement of Māori learners as Māori. This strategy is called *Te Rautaki Māori 2012–2017*.

Australia

The AQF is an agreed joint policy of Australian Government and state and territory Ministers with responsibility for education. The AQF was introduced in 1995, and implementation was phased in until it was fully implemented in 2000. The AQF incorporates qualifications from each education and training sector — higher education, VET, senior secondary school — into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

The AQF Council was established by Ministers in 2008 (replacing the former AQF Advisory Board) to monitor and maintain the AQF and provide strategic advice to Ministers to ensure it remained current and robust. Over 2009–10, the AQF Council undertook a major review of the AQF and in 2011, the new strengthened AQF was agreed by Ministers, with implementation to be complete by the end of 2014.

Following completion of this work, with agreement of all Ministers, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, working in consultation with state and territory governments, now has primary responsibility for the development, maintenance and monitoring of the AQF. Compliance with the AQF is regulated by the national higher education regulator, TEQSA, the national VET regulator, ASQA, and two state VET regulators[3]. The Department of Education and Training reports to the Australian Government Minister for Education and Training (who has portfolio responsibility for school education, vocational education and training, higher education, international education and youth), and consults state and territory colleagues through the relevant Council of Australian Government (COAG) Councils — currently, the COAG Education Council and the COAG Industry and Skills Council.

The Department of Education and Training is also responsible for administering public funding for higher education and for developing and administering higher education and VET policy and programmes, including income contingent loans in higher education and VET.

The Department administers the legislation for regulation of the higher education sector:

- the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* — the establishment legislation for the national higher education regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
- the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011*, a legislative instrument under the TEQSA Act against which TEQSA regulates institutions. The standards require that institutions meet the requirements of the AQF
- the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* which governs higher education funding and support to students.

Other regulation of higher education is made through legislative instrument under the Acts listed above.

3 The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority and the Western Australia Training Accreditation Council

In Australia, VET is the shared responsibility of the Australian Government and states and territories. All jurisdictions, besides Victoria and Western Australia for state based domestic students, have referred responsibility for regulation of the VET sector to the Australian Government (through ASQA).

Further, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training administers the national legislation for regulation of the VET sector outlined below, which includes requirements to comply with the AQF. Arrangements for states that have not referred all powers to the Australian Government are outlined further under Principle 2.

ASQA's regulation is supported by a comprehensive framework of legislation and standards, including the VET Quality Framework, the Standards for Accredited Courses, and related legislation for the providers of courses to overseas students.

The VET Quality Framework comprises the:

- *Standards for National VET Regulator Registered Training Organisations*
- Fit and Proper Person Requirements
- Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements
- Data Provision Requirements
- the AQF.

ASQA was established on 1 July 2011 through the enactment of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* as well as with charging, consequential and transitional legislation.

Under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*, the national training standards are established as legislative instruments—mandatory standards which are binding in their application. This means that providers are required to comply at all times with the standards prescribed in the legislative instruments in order to be registered as a training provider in Australia. The standards ensure nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment across Australia's VET system.

In performing its functions, ASQA is supported by a range of legislative instruments. These instruments relate to matters including standards for:

- organisations, courses and regulators, including English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) providers and courses and standards for VET regulators performing functions under the 2015 amendments to the *National Vocational and Training Regulator Act 2011*
- financial viability, fit and proper person and data requirements
- ASQA fees.

All instruments are publicly available on the database of Australian Government legislation at: www.comlaw.gov.au and on ASQA's website at www.asqa.gov.au/about/agency-overview/establishment-and-legislation.html.

The Department also administers the legislation for regulation of the international education sector:

- the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* — which sets out the registration process and obligations of registered providers, including the tuition protection service
- the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007*.

The Department's International Group takes the lead role in international engagement on education policy issues. The International Group's Qualification Recognition Policy Section acts as the national information centre for Australia under the UNESCO/Council of Europe Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention), assessing higher education and postsecondary technical and vocational overseas qualifications for general purposes.

The Department is also responsible for working with states, territories and non-government schools to deliver high quality school education.

Principle 2:

The New Zealand and Australian quality assurance systems for education and training are integral to their qualifications frameworks and are consistent with international quality assurance principles:

Responses to this principle clearly identify the organisations and agencies responsible for, and their authority for, the development and implementation of national quality assurance systems. This principle also explains the processes that are in place to ensure that the education and training system outcomes are relevant, nationally recognised and consistent, building confidence in qualifications.

The quality assurance systems are robust.

Australia and New Zealand operate national quality assurance systems that are similarly robust, providing public confidence in qualifications.

These quality assurance systems, of which the qualifications frameworks are fundamental, are based on set criteria which are consistent with relevant international good practice. Both countries' qualifications frameworks are underpinned by national registration of institutions by external monitoring bodies, and national accreditation of courses based on robust and measurable standards. An integral aspect of both systems is the requirement for internal management of quality assurance and continuous improvement by education and training institutions, with requirements for self-assessment and external review. The quality assurance systems cover all modes of delivery, including online, distance, domestic and transnational delivery, providing confidence in qualifications.

New Zealand

NZQA and Universities New Zealand follow the overarching rules set by NZQA for the quality assurance of qualifications and the tertiary education organisations that provide them. Both agencies use the same rules and criteria to quality assure qualifications, and are also consistent in their approach to the quality assurance of the programmes that lead to qualifications. Only the tertiary qualifications and organisations that are quality assured by one of the two agencies can receive government funding.

The NZQF: a qualifications framework with supporting quality assurance processes

The effectiveness and quality of the NZQF and the related Directory of Assessment Standards are supported by a multi-layered and integrated quality assurance system. There are quality checks at each level and for each component of the system as well as aspects of the health of the system overall. NZQA applies rules and quality criteria to ensure a high and consistent standard.

The evaluative approach (described below) underpins these quality checks, fostering self-assessment, evidence-based judgements and continuous improvement. The aim is to both check and boost quality and the organisation's capability and educational performance.

Quality assurance of the non-university tertiary sector

The Evaluative Quality Assurance Framework

NZQA operates an integrated quality assurance system where all the components support each other. The basis of the quality assurance system is the Evaluative Quality Assurance Framework (EQAF) introduced in late 2009. It uses an evaluative approach and:

- covers the quality assurance of the non-university tertiary education sector
- uses evaluation theory and practice to reach well-informed, consistent and reliable evidence-based judgements about all aspects of Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) performance and capability
- has a practical focus on outcomes[4] and key contributing processes
- builds awareness and improvement through organisational self-assessment.

This approach is flexible enough to be used by a wide range of organisations, but delivers valid and robust judgements of quality. The approach also seeks to develop and enhance a quality culture in TEOs, and to create an environment which values evidence and accountability and where autonomy is earned.

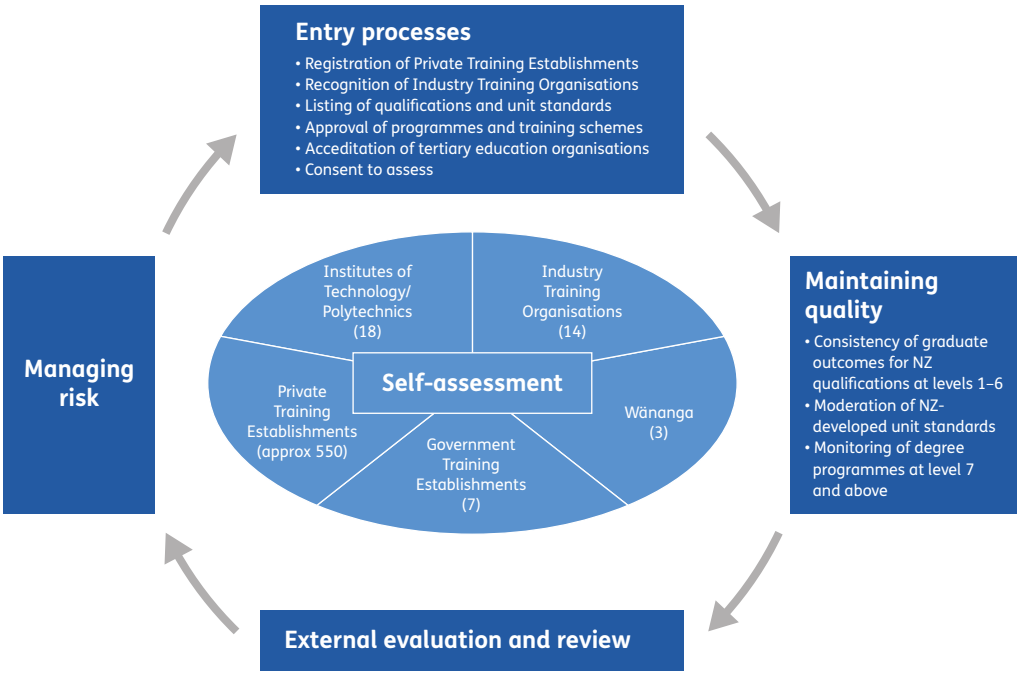
The EQAF has a strong focus on:

- learner achievement and outcomes for learners
- using evidence to improve outcomes for learners, business and communities
- a TEO being able to demonstrate that what it is doing is effective and meets learner and stakeholder needs.

4 Including: vocational outcomes that meet graduate, employer, regional and national needs; completing courses and qualifications, continuing to further study (Education Performance Indicators — EPIs); contributing to graduates' local and wider communities; graduates developing relevant personal skills, knowledge and cognitive abilities, and improved well-being; creating and disseminating new knowledge and supporting community, iwi and national development (source: Tertiary Evaluation Indicators, 2010, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/tertiary-evaluation-indicators/).

The key components of the quality assurance system are represented in the diagram below and a brief description of each component and its role in the system follows.

The Evaluative Quality Assurance Framework



TEOs are responsible for using **self-assessment** to maintain and improve their own quality and the outcomes they achieve for their learners and wider stakeholders, especially employers. Self-assessment focuses on identifying, responding to and meeting learner and stakeholder needs, evaluating the effectiveness of organisational processes and practices, and using the understanding gained to make real, worthwhile improvements to outcomes and learner achievement. NZQA does not prescribe how tertiary organisations do this, as every organisation is different, but has published evaluation indicators as a common guide for TEOs and NZQA to reach consistent evidence-based judgements. TEO self-assessment information provides the evidence base for all the quality assurance processes.

Entry processes

A private training establishment (PTE) must be registered with NZQA if it wants to develop, deliver or use qualifications listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework and standards listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards (DAS). The registration process ensures that the PTE meets all legislative requirements for an educational organisation, including NZQA rules. The PTE must have governing members who are suitable for delivering education with adequate staff, and equipment and facilities for the education delivered. Furthermore, the PTE must be financially stable with sound quality management systems and practices.

NZQA also provides advice to Ministers and the Tertiary Education Commission on the **recognition and re-recognition of ITOs**.

To be listed on the NZQF a **New Zealand qualification** at levels 1-6 on the NZQF must have defined outcomes that provide a profile of what graduates can do, be and know. Programmes developed by TEOs lead to the award of these New Zealand certificates or diplomas.

For a **programme[5] at levels 1–6 on the NZQF to be approved**, it must lead to a listed NZQF qualification and have a structure and components that allow learners to achieve the associated graduate profile. It must also have an appropriate NZQF level, credit value and amount of learning, and be designed to meet the specific identified needs of learners. It must show a progression of knowledge and skills and how the learning outcomes will be assessed.

Degree programmes[6] (at level 7–10 on the NZQF) are approved if they have appropriate learning outcomes and content, delivery methods, equipment, facilities, staff, regulations, assessment and moderation. Degree programmes must also be taught mainly by staff engaged in research. Degree programme applications are evaluated by a panel with the necessary skills and knowledge who advise the TEO and NZQA about the quality of the application.

Training schemes are smaller than programmes and are approved if they are genuinely needed by learners and stakeholders. Training schemes must have a coherent structure that allows learners to achieve the learning outcomes. They must also have an appropriate NZQF level and incorporate sufficient learning to demonstrate a progression of knowledge.

In order to be **accredited to deliver** a programme or training scheme, the applicant must show that the TEO has adequate staff, equipment and facilities to deliver it as approved. Sometimes NZQA visits the TEO as part of this process.

Consent to assess against assessment standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards is granted when the applicant has support from the standard setting body and meets the requirements associated with the standards. Sometimes the standard setting body visits the TEO as part of this process.

Maintaining quality

Consistency Reviews are a recently introduced requirement to assure consistency with outcomes prescribed by the New Zealand Qualifications, Certificates and Diplomas at level 1–6 on the NZQF. All tertiary education organisations awarding NZ qualifications at levels 1–6 must participate. The reviews, facilitated by an independent reviewer, consider the quality of the evidence presented by each TEO to decide if it is sufficient and if national consistency of the qualification can be confirmed. The Consistency Reviews and any follow up are managed by NZQA.

National **external moderation** ensures that organisations using NZQA-managed assessment standards are making assessor judgements consistent with the national standard. NZQA selects standards for moderation based on TEO history, risk, high use and issues that have been identified with the standards. Moderators look at samples of learner work sent in by TEOs and assess if the judgements are consistent with the national standard. NZQA recommends changes to assessment materials or moderation practice when assessor judgements are not verified by NZQA. NZQA follows up with TEOs to make sure they address the issues.

After a degree programme at NZQF level 7 and above is approved, NZQA appoints an **independent monitor** for the degree. The monitor visits the TEO annually to check if the degree is being delivered as approved and reports back to NZQA. NZQA follows up any recommendations from the report with the TEO. After a suitable amount of time, NZQA can give the TEO permission to self-monitor.

5 Programmes delivered by ITPs Wānanga and PTEs or organised by ITOs.

6 Delivered by ITPs, Wānanga and PTEs.

External evaluation and review (EER)

EER uses key questions directly addressing achievement, outcomes and key contributing processes to judge the quality of a TEO. It comes to evidence-based conclusions about the quality and performance of the TEO and publishes a public report. When NZQA detects issues, the evaluation finds the source and size of the problem. Immediately prior to an EER, NZQA requires compliance declarations and gathers information on the TEO from other parts of the quality assurance system and from elsewhere. The scope of an EER is designed to cover the strengths and weaknesses of the TEO. NZQA evaluates the TEO's educational performance and capability in self-assessment on-site and reports a level of confidence in each of these aspects. The EER is published on the NZQA website.

The TEO is also placed in one of four categories of capability:

Category 1: Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident or Confident in self-assessment

Category 2: Confident in educational performance and Confident or Highly Confident in self-assessment

Category 3: Not Yet Confident in either educational performance or self-assessment

Category 4: Not Confident in either educational performance or self-assessment

Mātauranga Māori Evaluative Quality Assurance (MM EQA) provides quality assurance for TEOs that deliver qualifications or programmes based on Mātauranga Māori or where the whole organisational approach is based on Mātauranga Māori. MMEQA is integrated into all parts of the quality assurance framework and uses evaluative approaches developed collectively with the sector.

Managing Risk

NZQA has rigorous **processes to investigate and manage risk**. NZQA collects information on organisations from NZQA's quality assurance processes (i.e. EER, applications, standard setting body or monitor's visits), complaints received and concerns raised by government organisations such as INZ. In its investigations NZQA gathers information on whether there is a risk to students or a breach of NZQA's rules or legislative requirements and takes action, including statutory action to address these. This can include:

- issuing compliance notices to and imposing conditions on organisations
- withdrawing quality assurance status granted by NZQA (i.e. registration, consent to assess, approvals, accreditation)
- legal action for breaches of the *Education Act 1989*.

Quality assurance of NZQF qualifications and programmes delivered offshore

NZQF programmes can be delivered offshore, and NZQF qualifications and programmes can be designed to meet specific offshore requirements, but this context must be included in the application for programme approval or approval to develop a qualification.

These programmes and qualifications must meet all the relevant NZQA rules. Any offshore delivery of programmes also needs to meet the NZQA Offshore Programme Delivery Rules.

Regulation of international education

New Zealand institutions are required to be a signatory to the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* (the Code) if they want to enroll international students in their courses.

The Code is a document that provides education providers and their agents with a framework for properly supporting international students while they are studying in New Zealand. The Code is established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989.

The Code sets out the minimum standards of advice and care that are expected of education providers with international students. The Code applies to pastoral care and the provision of information only, and not to academic standards. The current code administrator is NZQA.

If a student has concerns about an education provider not complying with the Code, and these concerns are not resolved by internal grievance procedures, the student can contact the International Education Appeal Authority (IEAA). The IEAA enforces the standards in the Code and, if the Code is breached, can order restitution or action to fix the problem. The IEAA refers serious Code breaches to the Review Panel, which can suspend or remove a provider as a signatory to the Code.

NZQA's Student Fee Protection Rules protect the interests of domestic and international students. Registered private training establishments (PTEs) in New Zealand must put students' fees in a trust, which can only be drawn on after course content has been delivered to the student. If a PTE closes, the money for the undelivered content can either be refunded to the student, or transferred to a provider willing to enrol the student. This requirement was established under Section 253E(1) of the Education Act 1989.

Quality assurance systems in the university sector

The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (Universities New Zealand) has statutory responsibility, under the Education Act (1989), for the quality assurance of the New Zealand universities.

There are two bodies that oversee quality assurance of New Zealand universities, Universities New Zealand's Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA)[7].

Quality assurance in the university sector is underpinned by ten key principles, i.e. that quality assurance processes are:

- developed by the universities
- evidence-based
- enhancement-led
- founded on self-review
- assured by peer review
- collective and collegial
- individually binding
- internationally endorsed
- independently operated
- publicly accountable.

7 Previously NZUAAU — New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit

Programme approval and accreditation in the university sector

CUAP[8] is the body responsible for exercising powers with regards to compliance, approval and accreditation. CUAP comprises a representative from each of the universities, a Chair (usually a Vice-Chancellor) and Deputy Chair appointed by Universities New Zealand, and a student representative.

Both NZQA and Universities New Zealand use the same overarching rules and criteria to quality assure qualifications.

Universities normally apply for programme approval, and the accreditation to deliver that programme, in one step. Proposals for new qualifications or programmes, or for major changes to existing offerings proceed through internal university development and approval processes before being submitted to CUAP. At various stages in a university's internal process, student, non-academic and professional input is also sought. Proposals approved by a university's council are then submitted to CUAP and subjected to a peer-review process across the entire university system. During the CUAP process, proposals are either, approved by the universities, amended as part of the peer-review process and then approved, or discussed at a meeting of CUAP. If CUAP is satisfied that the proposals meet the approval and accreditation rules then it will formally approve them. Proposals that are not approved at a CUAP meeting may also be referred back to the submitting university for further changes, withdrawn by the university or rejected.

Programmes approved by CUAP are listed on the NZQF in the same way as programmes approved by NZQA.

Programmes approved by CUAP are subject to moderation once the first cohort has graduated. Universities must submit Graduating Year Reviews to CUAP for peer review. Graduating Year Review reports are assessed by CUAP against the approval criteria of the original proposal. Where CUAP has serious concerns about a programme, it has the authority to require changes, request a further review or to withdraw the programme.

After moderation all university programmes are required to be subject to regular programme review. The review cycle is determined by each university's quality assurance policies. How a university manages and responds to these programme reviews is an important focus of academic audit.

Academic audit in the university sector

The AQA, an independent body established by Universities New Zealand, undertakes regular audits of institutions and promotes quality enhancement practices across the university sector. AQA's audits of New Zealand universities occur on a five-year cycle and focus on the university's mechanisms for ensuring academic quality.

The key components of institutional audit are:

- institutional self-review
- institutional academic audit by an external panel (including an international member)
- a published audit report
- follow-up reporting on recommendations.

8 Refer to the Committee on University Academic Programmes Handbook, www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/aboutus/sc/cuap/cuap-handbook

AQA audit panels review university audit portfolios and focus their attention on areas of particular importance to universities, including mechanisms for:

- quality assurance and enhancement in the design, monitoring and evaluation of courses and programmes of study for degrees and other qualifications
- quality assurance and enhancement of the research basis of university undergraduate teaching and postgraduate education
- quality assurance and enhancement in teaching, learning and assessment, including in postgraduate supervision
- quality assurance and enhancement of the appointment and performance of academic and other staff who contribute directly to the teaching and research functions
- considering the views of students, employers and other stakeholders as part of ongoing quality assurance and enhancement of courses and programmes.

Each audit cycle follows a protocol developed by AQA including a framework which defines the focus of audit[9]. Final audit reports commend good practice and make recommendations intended to assist the university's own programme of continuous improvement. These audit reports are publicly available on the AQA website[10]. Universities report formally on their response to the recommendations one year after each audit and again at the time of the next audit.

Only the tertiary qualifications and organisations that are quality assured by one of the two agencies can receive government funding.

Australia

The Australian education system is underpinned by internationally accepted principles of quality assurance. The quality assurance of higher education (universities and non-universities), vocational education and training and schools is a multi-layered, inter-related structure across bodies under both Australian Government and state government responsibility. Fundamental components across international quality assurance frameworks[11] are the registration of education and training providers and the accreditation of qualifications.

In Australia, the registration of education and training providers involves the approval of providers to deliver AQF qualifications, the ongoing self-assessment of providers and the monitoring of compliance by the national regulators against national standards. The accreditation of a qualification is the process by which the complexity, achievement standards and volume of learning of a qualification are endorsed as appropriate for the type of qualification, thus allowing the qualification to gain national recognition within the AQF.

Further to these fundamental components is the notion that institutional and programme quality is primarily the responsibility of education providers, and that a quality assurance agency's primary responsibility should be providing a policy framework within which providers can implement and manage their own ongoing self-assessment and monitor compliance to nationally agreed quality assurance principles and processes, with external registration, assessment and validation.

A summary of how these principles are implemented and applied within the context of Australia's education system is as follows.

9 Refer to www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle5

10 Refer to http://www/aqa.ac.nz/academic-audit.

11 Coles M & Bateman A 2014, *Qualifications frameworks and Quality assurance systems: Briefing paper*, pp.13-15.

Higher education

Registration of higher education institutions

Australia has national registration of higher education institutions.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency is Australia's national quality assurance agency for higher education. TEQSA is responsible for ensuring that providers that wish to operate within Australia's higher education system meet the Higher Education Standards Framework, which is established as a legislative instrument under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*. TEQSA is an independent statutory authority, governed by Commissioners appointed by the Minister for Education and Training.

Higher education providers are required to adhere to the Provider Registration Standards, which set the bar that providers must meet with regards to:

- financial viability and sustainability
- corporate and academic governance
- primacy of academic quality and integrity
- management and human resources
- responsibilities to students
- physical and electronic resources and infrastructure.

In registering providers, TEQSA also assesses that providers meet the following Standards:

Course accreditation standards

- course design is appropriate and meet the Qualification Standards
- course resourcing and information is adequate
- admission criteria are appropriate
- teaching and learning are of high quality
- assessment is effective and expected student learning outcomes are achieved
- course monitoring, review, updating and termination are appropriately managed
- institutions that wish to apply for self-accrediting authority meet established criteria.

Qualification standards

- higher education awards delivered meet the appropriate criteria
- certification documentation issued is accurate and protects against fraudulent use
- articulation, recognition of prior learning and credit arrangements meet the appropriate criteria.

Institution categories

TEQSA will register institutions (known as higher education providers) for a period of up to seven years. Higher education providers are able to seek approval from TEQSA to be registered in a particular Provider Category that uses the word 'university', if they meet the additional criteria. The Provider Category Standards set out criteria for each category. There are five university categories as follows:

- Australian University
- Australian University College
- Australian University of Specialisation
- Overseas University
- Overseas University of Specialisation.

TEQSA also has the ability to impose conditions on an institution's registration or course accreditation, such as reporting to TEQSA regularly on particular issues. TEQSA uses annual Provider Information Requests and its annual provider risk assessments to monitor key aspects of providers' operations during registration periods, which supports TEQSA's risk based approach to regulation of the sector.

For renewal of registration processes, TEQSA employs its risk based approach by taking into account a provider's regulatory history, track record of delivering higher education and risk assessments to determine the scope of assessment and the information a provider must submit to TEQSA.

Under the TEQSA Act, TEQSA maintains the National Register of Higher Education Providers, which is publicly available on the internet. The National Register lists registered higher education providers and, for non-self-accrediting institutions, each course they are accredited to deliver.

Accreditation of higher education qualifications

In Australia's higher education sector, qualifications are required to comply with the *Higher Education Standards Framework* under the *TEQSA Act*. The Standards require that awards leading to a higher education qualification at levels 5–10 of the AQF must comply with the corresponding specifications in the AQF.

The Standards also set robust requirements in relation to internal quality assurance processes, corporate and academic governance, and admission processes. The Standards require institutions to have robust internal processes for design and approval of courses of study. These processes must take account of external standards and requirements, such as published discipline standards, input from relevant external stakeholders and external professional accreditation. Institutions must act on comparative data on the performance of students, and undertake systematic monitoring, review and improvement of courses of study, for example through benchmarking and peer review. Institutions are also required to protect academic integrity through effective policies and measures to ensure the integrity of student assessment. When accrediting courses, TEQSA examines whether design of the course of study meets the requirements of the Standards.

In Australia, universities and a small number of higher education providers maintain self-accrediting authority. Self-accrediting authority is a significant responsibility and providers that self-accredit some or all of their higher education courses are accountable for meeting the Standards. TEQSA has the authority to audit the courses of a self-accrediting institution

to ensure that the provider is properly exercising its self-accrediting authority in line with the Standards. When undertaking a renewal of registration process for a self-accrediting institution, TEQSA will take a sample of evidence relating to courses to assess that they meet the requirements of the Standards relating to course accreditation and the AQF.

Institutions that do not have self-accrediting authority must apply to TEQSA for accreditation (and re-accreditation) of each of the courses they offer. A course may be granted accreditation for up to seven years.

In assessing all institutions against the standards, TEQSA may choose to conduct site visits, and/or engage expert consultants, in addition to evidence provided by the institution.

Australian Government funding is also provided to higher education providers that have separate approval under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA). Further monitoring occurs in connection with funding responsibilities pertinent to HESA, including a range of financial viability and students and staff reporting responsibilities.

Higher education standards panel

The Higher Education Standards Panel was established under the TEQSA Act to advise and make recommendations to the Minister for Education and Training and TEQSA on the Higher Education Standards Framework. These Standards are the benchmark against which TEQSA registers and evaluates higher education institutions.

The Minister appoints the Panel members on the basis of professional knowledge and demonstrated expertise. The Panel is able to provide advice when requested or on its own initiative, ensuring that the Standards remain reflective of the needs of the sector.

Vocational education and training

Australia's VET system features the skills requirements of different occupations within the labour market and builds the content of VET qualifications and accredited courses around this. This system of qualification design built on the skills requirements of different occupations within the Australian labour market rather than theoretical curriculum driven prescription by training organisations is an important strength of Australian VET provision. Registered Training Organisations deliver industry qualifications in compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015, to offer the highest possible quality training now and into the future.

Registration of VET institutions

Vocational education and training is a shared Australian Government and state/territory government responsibility.

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is Australia's national VET regulator. ASQA is an independent statutory authority, comprising three Commissioners appointed by the Minister for Education and Training.

ASQA regulates Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) operating in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland or Tasmania. ASQA is also the regulatory body for RTOs in Victoria and Western Australia that offer courses to overseas students and/or offer courses to students in a state or territory that has referred powers to the Australian Government.

RTOs that deliver solely in Victoria and Western Australia to domestic students are regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the Western Australian Training Accreditation Council (WATAC) respectively.

ASQA registration requires providers to comply with all components of the VET Quality Framework, established in legislation under the NVR Act which includes the:

- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- Fit and proper person requirements
- Financial viability risk assessment requirements
- Data provision requirements
- Australian Qualifications Framework.

From 1 January 2015, a single set of Standards for RTOs took effect, applying to all RTOs regardless of the regulator. The standards for RTOs include requirements that:

- the RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices are responsive to industry and learner needs and meet the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses
- the operations of the RTO are quality assured, including that the RTO is responsible for delivery through any third party arrangements
- the RTO issues, maintains and accepts AQF certification documentation
- accurate and accessible information about an RTO, its services and performance is available to inform current and prospective learners and clients, and each learner is properly informed and protected
- the RTO has effective governance and administration arrangements in place.

Prior to 1 January 2015[12], the VRQA and the WATAC required the small number of RTOs registered for domestic delivery in Victoria and Western Australia respectively to meet the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The AQTF had the same requirements as the VET Quality Framework, ensuring consistent standards to RTOs in the VET sector. The National Standards for VET Regulators, which were established in legislation and apply to all three regulators, further ensure regulation of the VET sector is consistent, effective, proportional, responsive and transparent.

RTOs can be registered for a period up to seven years. ASQA and the two state regulators are also able to impose conditions on a RTO's registration, such as shorter registration periods or requirements to report to the regulator on particular issues.

ASQA employs a risk assessment framework to apply a risk based, proportionate approach to regulation of the VET sector. This ensures regulatory action is targeted appropriately and informs the scope of assessment undertaken by ASQA in assessing registration and accreditation applications.

All RTOs registered to operate in Australia are listed on the publicly available National Register of VET, available at training.gov.au. Training.gov.au is maintained by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, on behalf of state and territory governments.

12 Transition arrangements are in place until such time as the VRQA transitions to the arrangements for the new Standards.

Accreditation of VET qualifications

The importance of employer and industry participation, contribution and effort is a mainstay of the development of VET AQF qualifications and other accredited courses that meet the needs of individuals, skills requirements and the economy. An important feature of Australia's VET system is employer representation and industry involvement regarding the design, development and redevelopment of vocational qualifications and accredited courses. Employers and industry play a critical role in ensuring Australian training products are available to meet the current and future growth needs of Australia's economy and society, and to identify labour market economics and trends to forecast needs and the appropriate investment in training products and supporting VET resources. As a result, Australian VET qualifications and courses are characterised by standards for competency requirements for occupations, underpinned by quality principles.

VET qualifications in Australia are developed either as part of an Industry training package (which comprise the vast majority of Australian VET qualifications) or as a VET accredited course. The National Standards for Training Packages and the Standards for VET Accredited Courses require qualifications to comply with the AQF, to provide appropriate competency outcomes, and meet established training needs (see also Principle 5).

The relevant accrediting authorities consider whether these requirements have been met when qualifications are submitted for approval. ASQA and the two state regulators are responsible for accrediting VET Accredited Courses in addition to short courses, that do not align with the AQF. Once a course has been accredited, it is listed on the National VET Register. Training Packages are developed by Industry Skills Councils and are endorsed by the National Training Package accrediting body (currently the Department of Education and Training). As part of the VET reform process underway, the Government is considering new approaches to the development and maintenance of training packages, to improve the responsiveness of qualifications to industry needs.

RTOs may only deliver recognised training such as a qualification, a VET accredited course or short course if the regulator has approved it to be on their scope of registration. RTOs must apply to ASQA or the state regulator if they wish to change their scope of registration. When assessing an application to change a RTO's scope of registration, ASQA considers:

- the RTO's ability to provide the VET course in accordance with the VET Quality Framework and if the applicant is currently complying with the VET Quality Framework and its conditions of registration
- the other VET courses offered by the RTO.

VET funding is the primary responsibility of state governments, although the Australian Government provides income contingent loans to students in higher level VET qualifications. The Australian Government provides funding to states and territories, and states and territories, in providing funding to RTOs, develop and maintain additional standards as a basis for continued access to state funding programmes.

Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council

The Minister for Education and Training makes the national VET standards as legislative instruments under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*. These standards require the agreement of the relevant COAG Council, which includes Ministers from each state and territory. Currently, this is the COAG Industry and Skills Council.

In the past, the relevant COAG Council has established various committees with responsibility for drafting and providing advice on national standards for VET, most recently the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC). The NSSC was disbanded in April 2014, and replacement arrangements are being established as part of a wider VET reform process.

Quality assurance in international education

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training is responsible for:

- providing policy advice on international education and training to Australian Government Ministers
- supporting the Australian international education sector
- facilitating international collaborations and partnerships in education and training
- developing and supporting a regulatory system for international education providers (see below)
- managing bilateral and multilateral agreements and conventions related to international cooperation in education and research
- supporting student and labour market mobility through qualifications recognition.

For more information see www.internationaleducation.gov.au

Regulation of international education

Australian institutions are regulated under domestic quality assurance frameworks. In addition, the legislative framework established through the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act) provides an extra layer of protection for overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa. It requires all providers and courses that enrol overseas students to be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), see cricos.deewr.gov.au.

In order to be listed on CRICOS, an institution must first meet strict entry tests. Once registered on CRICOS, institutions must continue to comply with a number of requirements to:

- ensure they maintain adequate resources to deliver quality education and training
- protect overseas student tuition fees
- promote overseas student safety and wellbeing
- assist with monitoring the compliance of overseas students with the conditions of their visas.

Under the ESOS Act, ASQA is responsible for approving RTOs and providers of English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) that wish to deliver courses to international students and registering them on CRICOS. TEQSA is responsible for approving CRICOS registration for registered higher education providers, providers of Foundation Programmes and providers of ELICOS courses of study in a pathway arrangement with a registered higher education provider.

The ESOS Act ensures that overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa receive high-quality education and training and receive the services for which they have paid.

Transnational education and training

Australian transnational education and training, also known as offshore or cross-border education and training, refers to the delivery and/or assessment of programmes and courses by an accredited Australian institution in a country other than Australia. Transnational programmes may lead to an AQF qualification or may be a non-award course.

Offshore Australian institutions must still meet the national standards set out in the relevant Australian legislation, as well as any regulatory requirements of the country in which they are operating. TEQSA and ASQA are responsible for ensuring an Australian institution's offshore operations comply with the legislated standards.

Principle 3:

There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels of the NZQF and the AQF:

Responses to this principle outline the technical work which has occurred to demonstrate the referencing of the levels between the NZQF and the AQF.

Qualifications levels are accepted as comparable.

There is a clear and demonstrable link between the levels of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework and the Australian Qualifications Framework.

The linkages are based on a detailed technical and contextual analysis of the learning outcomes of the frameworks, tested through social effect and independent comparative processes and agreed by expert communities of practice.

AQF	NZQF
Level 1	Level 1
Level 2	Level 2
Level 3	Level 3
Level 4	Level 4
Level 5	Level 5
Level 6	Level 6
Level 7	Level 7
Level 8	Level 8
Level 9	Level 9
Level 10	Level 10

The underlying principle in referencing is that the processes and outcomes themselves are transparent, relevant and generate trust, enabling the comparison of the frameworks and the levels within each framework. A summary of the approach and outcomes follows.

Methodological approach

To determine there is a clear and demonstrable link between the NZQF and the AQF levels, a comparative process for matching qualifications frameworks was used:

- structural comparison of the two frameworks i.e. comparing the architecture and policy of the two frameworks, the concepts of learning outcomes on which they are based and the way the levels are defined
- technical comparison of the two frameworks i.e. expected learning outcomes — knowledge, skills and application, credit allocations and framework levels. This comparison included a linguistic analysis of the expected learning outcomes statements of the level descriptors in the two frameworks.
- contextual matching i.e. qualifications type, definition and purpose, delivery arrangements, assessment methods, volume of learning, credit
- social effects matching i.e. outcomes of graduates
- independent comparative processes i.e. recruitment and selection, admissions bodies.

The structural and technical comparison provided an initial view, but for some levels, further analysis and research was required to make a more robust and comprehensive comparison. The contextual and social effects matching process, was used to deepen comparison[13]. Three additional concepts were also considered before final judgements of comparability were made. These included analysis of bands of complexity, best fit, and substantial difference which required the attention of national experts with competence to make the professional judgements. Discussion by the project advisory groups and stakeholders helped in making final decisions about the comparability of the NZQF and AQF levels.

Structural comparison of the NZQF and the AQF

New Zealand

The NZQF is a unified framework with a dual purpose: to set out the architecture of the New Zealand qualifications system, and to act as the single repository for all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand. All approved qualifications are listed on the NZQF in relation to each other and the NZQF levels, from senior secondary school through to doctoral degrees, are listed on the NZQF.

The NZQF is based on learning outcomes. Everything listed on the NZQF is described in terms of the knowledge and skills it recognises and how the knowledge and skills are applied. It is these outcomes that determine which NZQF level the component is listed at.

NZQF level

All qualifications on the NZQF are assigned one of the ten levels.[14] Each level is based on the complexity of outcomes, with level one the least complex and level ten the most complex.

For the level descriptors see http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/understand-nz-quals/.

13 It should be noted that the aim of the contextual and social effects matching process was not to compare or match all qualifications at all levels. Rather, the process provided a holistic view of learning outcomes described for qualifications located at particular levels in the frameworks.

14 See NZQF Qualifications Listing and Operational Rules 2012

Types of qualifications

All quality assured qualifications listed on the NZQF fit into a qualification type. Each qualification type is defined by an agreed set of criteria which includes the expected generic outcomes, the level at which the qualifications are listed and the number of credits required at each level.

New Zealand Qualifications Framework structure

Level	Qualification Types
10	Doctoral Degree
9	Master's Degree
8	Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Bachelor Honours Degree
7	Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates
6 5	Diplomas
4 3 2 1	Certificates

NZQF policy for changes to qualification type definitions

The NZQF has evolved since it was first introduced and it will continue to change to provide an effective and usable qualifications framework. Qualification type definitions are reviewed periodically to ensure that the NZQF definitions remain fit for purpose and are clear. This includes reviewing whether there is a need for additional qualification type definitions. The merits of any additional qualification types are evaluated against the design and principles of the NZQF.

If changes are required, NZQA in consultation with Universities New Zealand, will draft proposed changes and consult with the wider sector. Any qualification type added, removed, or changed in the NZQF is approved by the NZQA Board. Where substantial changes have been made to definitions, transitional arrangements may be put in place for existing qualifications.

Australia

The Australian Qualifications Framework

The AQF incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector — higher education, VET, senior secondary school — into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

The organising framework for the AQF is a taxonomic structure of 10 levels and 14 qualification types structured in terms of increasing complexity of learning outcomes. With the exception of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, each qualification type is located at an AQF level. Each level and each qualification type is described in terms of the knowledge, skills, and application of knowledge and skills that are expected of graduates. The taxonomic approach is designed to enable consistency in the way in which qualifications are described as well as clarity about the differences and relationships between qualification types.

Australian Qualifications Framework structure

The AQF structure of 10 levels has the following qualification types at each level, displayed diagrammatically in a circle.

The AQF is an integrated policy that comprises:

- the learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification type
- the specifications for the application of the AQF in the accreditation and development of qualifications
- the policy requirements for issuing AQF qualifications
- policy guidance for qualification linkages and student pathways
- the policy requirements for the addition or removal of qualification types in the AQF.

Structural comparison

The structural comparison concluded that both the NZQF and the AQF:

- are national qualifications frameworks which apply throughout each country's jurisdiction
- have governance arrangements
- have well-developed quality assurance systems
- are unified frameworks covering school, vocational and higher education/academic qualifications
- share essential design features which enable a direct comparison of the levels in the two frameworks including a ten-level structure with qualification types located at each of the levels, described by a taxonomy of learning outcomes
- describe learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills
- use indicators of volume or credits for qualification types.

On the NZQF, there are descriptors for 17 qualification types, while the AQF has descriptors for 14 qualification types. Each qualification type develops the level criteria in more detail, allowing multiple qualification types at the same level to provide diversity in qualification purposes and outcomes.

Technical, contextual and social comparison of the AQF and the NZQF

The technical comparison began with a direct comparison of the text in both the NZQF and AQF level descriptors. This exercise determined there were many linguistic similarities between the NZQF and AQF at all levels of the framework and also some important conceptual differences.

A comparison of the text is included below.

Following the technical comparison both Australia and New Zealand used contextual and social effects matching to test whether the qualifications and outcomes of graduates compared as closely as the language used in each of the knowledge, skills and application areas.

The results of this matching are also included below.

The objective was to establish the correspondence between qualifications levels in both the AQF and NZQF. When the conclusions of the comparative analysis of the level descriptors and the results of the contextual and social effects matching are combined, referencing between the levels of the two frameworks was agreed.

Comment

Historically, the NQF (the NZQF predecessor) was developed in the context of political, economic and social reforms. While qualifications already existed, there was a lack of transparent comparability in educational programmes and confusion around naming and classifying qualifications.

Key attributes of the NZQF are described using outcomes language — level descriptors, qualification type definitions, graduate profiles within outcome statements for individual qualifications. The learning outcomes are broad in order to encompass different types of qualifications at the same level of complexity.

The development of the outcomes language was to focus on the intended qualification graduate outcomes in the development of a qualification. This forms part of the basis for the quality assurance framework, which also has a focus on the actual outcomes for learners and stakeholders.

The AQF was also developed in the context of political, economic and social reforms. There was increased focus on ensuring that the education and training system was delivering the skills and competencies that the economy needed, and on improving consistency and mobility across the states and territories within Australia. Introduction of the AQF reformed the existing landscape of state and territory based qualifications into a consistent national framework.

The AQF underwent a significant review in 2009-2010 to ensure that qualification outcomes remain relevant and nationally consistent, continue to support flexible linkages and pathways and enable national and international portability and comparability of qualifications. The revised AQF is structured in terms of increasing complexity of learning outcomes — this enables consistency in the way qualifications are described as well as clarity about the differences and relationships between qualification types, and ensures a strong focus on learning outcomes.

Differences in language in the AQF and NZQF

The learning outcomes of the AQF are comparable to the NZQF with two key differences in terms of language used in the skills and application learning outcomes. Instead of repeating these terms as differences at every level, they are explained below.

Communication

The AQF defines communication skills as skills that enable a person to convey information so that it is received and understood and includes written and oral, literacy and numeracy skills appropriate for the level of the qualification. Skills are described in terms of the kinds and complexity of skills, and the AQF specifically includes communication skills. Further, the AQF includes communication skills as one of the four broad categories of generic learning outcomes.

In the NZQF learning outcomes, communication skills are implied through the ability to interact and collaborate with others and contribute to group performance. Communication skills are specifically mentioned in the qualification type descriptors.

Leadership

The NZQF concentrates on the idea of leadership throughout the levels in relation to application of knowledge and skills. It is a continuum of complexity starting with collaboration with others, moving to having some responsibility for the performance of others through to leadership within a profession or discipline.

The AQF has similar expectations of leadership however the concept is often described differently. For example, the AQF requires graduates to have the ability to exercise various levels of judgement and to transmit knowledge, information and skills to others. Leadership is also specified in the AQF qualification type descriptors.

AQF level 1 and NZQF level 1

Key to coloured text: Red — Knowledge / Blue — Skills / Green — Application

The purpose of a qualification at level 1 on the NZQF and the AQF is to equip individuals with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and community involvement. Qualifications at this level in New Zealand and Australia are pathways into level 2 qualifications or into vocational education and training.

The language and intent in the learning outcomes of level 1 in the NZQF and the AQF are similar. The NZQF and AQF knowledge learning outcomes are almost identical. Both refer to graduates at level 1 having foundational knowledge. There is also similarity between the skills required in both frameworks. The AQF specifies foundational skills for routine activities and the NZQF specifies basic skills for simple tasks.

A difference at level 1 is the NZQF requires graduates at level 1 to apply basic solutions to simple problems and the AQF requires graduates to identify and report simple issues and problems.

The AQF definition of autonomy to apply knowledge and skills with an appropriate degree of independence for the level of the qualification, stated in the application section, is similar to the NZQF requirement for responsibility for own learning.

Although graduates in Australia are required to identify and report issues as opposed to the NZQF applying basic solutions to basic problems, the overall learning outcomes and pathways of graduates at this level are sufficiently similar for the levels to be comparable.

Overall, AQF level 1 and NZQF level 1 are comparable.

AQF level 2 and NZQF level 2

Employment outcomes for graduates with qualifications at level 2 on the NZQF and AQF are occupations that are mainly routine using limited practical skills and basic industry/operational knowledge in a defined context, working under direct supervision. Qualifications at this level are pathways into trade qualifications and level 3 qualifications.

The purpose of this level in both the NZQF and the AQF is preparation for further learning.

Both frameworks refer to basic factual knowledge. The AQF uses technical and procedural knowledge and the NZQF refers to operational knowledge, which New Zealand and Australia agreed are similar concepts.

There is similarity between the skills learning outcomes in both frameworks. The AQF skills for defined activities are similar to the NZQF skills for standard processes. The AQF context of provide solutions to a limited range of predictable skills processes is similar to the NZQF apply known solutions to familiar problems.

In the application of knowledge and skills outcomes the AQF demonstration of autonomy and limited judgement is similar to the NZQF outcome of some responsibility relating to learning and performance. In both instances the amount of personal initiative is circumscribed. In the NZQF the circumscription is indicated not only by some but also by the context of work under general supervision. In the AQF it is not only limited judgement but work in structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters.

The level shows some differences between the language of the NZQF and the AQF, but viewing the level outcomes as a whole demonstrates that the levels are comparable. Contextual and social effects matching took into account the overall purpose of the qualifications at this level and the pathways of graduates, and this supported the comparability.

Overall, AQF level 2 and NZQF level 2 are comparable.

Contextual background for levels 3 and 4

Levels 3 and 4 on the AQF and the NZQF contain flagship qualifications (trade qualifications in Australia and New Zealand and senior secondary school qualifications in New Zealand) which are important considerations in the referencing process.

The Joint Working Group (JWG) spent significant time deliberating the comparability of levels 3 and 4 of the NZQF and the AQF because of the importance of these qualifications. The comparative process was deepened by looking beyond the technical matching and into contextual matching (qualification types, definitions and purpose), social effects matching (how well supported is the qualification in the design setting, delivery setting and amongst those who use it, and outcomes of graduates) and independent comparative processes (perceptions from national governing bodies and professional bodies).

In Australia, the majority of the trade qualifications sit at level 3 on the AQF, while the majority of the New Zealand trade qualifications sit at level 4 on the NZQF.

Industry training organisations, which set the qualifications, and registration bodies, which accept the qualifications to grant licences, agree that the trade qualifications are equivalent, even though they sit at different levels on the AQF and NZQF.

In New Zealand, the highest school qualification sits at level 3 (NCEA Level 3). The results from NCEA Level 3 are used for the purpose of university entrance, both in New Zealand and abroad, and to calculate the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) for New Zealanders applying for entrance into Australian universities.

Many New Zealand and Australian stakeholders considered the possibility of comparing AQF level 3 with NZQF level 4 to reflect that the New Zealand trade qualifications at this level are equivalent to the Australian trade qualifications at level 3 on the AQF. They found, however, the learning outcomes for level 4 on both the NZQF and AQF are similar in terms of language and outcomes.

Discussions between stakeholders and the JWG took into account the concept of substantial difference from the the UNESCO/Council of Europe Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention). The use of substantial difference in this report requires a test to find if the link from level to level is beyond what can be justified or proved, otherwise the link is accepted. Linking AQF level 3 to NZQF level 4 was beyond what could be proved or justified in terms of language and other qualifications sitting at those levels.

Under the best fit principle the decision not to level AQF 3 with NZQF 4 was based on the collective professional judgements of stakeholders. If levels are understood as corridors and not as exact lines then the AQF trade qualifications sit at the upper end of the AQF level 3 corridor.

AQF level 3 and NZQF level 3

The intent of qualifications at level 3 in the NZQF and AQF are to provide pathways to further study and to qualify graduates to undertake skilled, specific work.

The knowledge learning outcomes required in both frameworks at level 3 are similar. Both frameworks require some theoretical knowledge. Both frameworks specify that knowledge and generic skills are for a specific area/field of work or study.

The AQF and NZQF generic skills learning outcomes are similar in that both demand breadth and capacity to select and apply solutions to standard/routine problems. A difference is that the AQF requires higher capability to deal with sometimes unpredictable problems, compared with the NZQF's familiar problems.

The higher generic skills requirement in the AQF is balanced by the higher NZQF application requirements.

Both the AQF and NZQF application learning outcomes require the exercise of responsibility or autonomy, though in both instances this is limited. In the case of the AQF this is explicitly stated and in the case of the NZQF this is implied by reference to limited supervision. The NZQF requirement relating to autonomy, however, described as major responsibility for own learning and performance, is stronger than that of the AQF, which requires known and stable contexts within established parameters.

On balance, applying the principle of best fit and substantial difference, the similarities of the learning outcomes for NZQF level 3 and AQF level 3 are greater than the differences.

AQF level 3 and NZQF level 3 are comparable.

AQF level 4 and NZQF level 4

Employment outcomes at level 4 on the NZQF and AQF require a broad range of industry/job specific skills combined with a broad knowledge base in a wide variety of specific contexts. Employees may provide leadership and guidance to others with some limited responsibility for the output of others.

The knowledge outcomes for both frameworks are similar at this level. Both require broad, operational/technical and theoretical knowledge.

The skills requirements of the NZQF and AQF are also similar at this level. Both require selecting and applying solutions using a range of methods and tools to familiar and unfamiliar problems (NZQF) and predictable and sometimes unpredictable problems (AQF). Unpredictable problems are similar to unfamiliar problems.

The application learning outcomes at level 4 contain some differences in language and intent. The NZQF is more specific, due to the type of qualifications that sit at this level while the AQF language is broader.

The NZQF refers to the self-management of learning and performance and some responsibility for the performance of others. This relates to the responsibility a qualified tradesperson would have at this level. Self-management includes autonomy, and to a lesser extent judgement (as defined in the AQF): autonomy and judgement are tempered by limited responsibility in the AQF, making autonomy at this level more restrained than self-management in the NZQF. Limited responsibility in the AQF does not specify whether this is in relation to others or of one's self.

A best fit principle has been applied to level 4 of the NZQF and the AQF with recognition that there are some exceptions in relation to traditional trade qualifications, as explained above.

AQF level 4 and NZQF level 4 are comparable.

Progression through AQF levels 5–7

The AQF allows for depth and breadth of learning outcomes, to allow flexibility and progression paths for different qualifications serving different purposes at the same level. This reflects the dual sector nature of the framework.

This is particularly evidenced by level 5 of the AQF, which requires specialised knowledge in a specific area or a broad field of work and learning. This is demonstrated through the qualifications at this level (Diploma). AQF level 5 qualifications are both the expert qualification offered in the VET sector and the first qualification in the higher education sector.

As a graduate progresses to AQF level 6, broad theoretical and technical knowledge of a specific area or broad field of work and learning is required. This reflects that Associate Degrees at AQF level 6 often encompass broad knowledge for specialist degrees for advanced skill work, such as engineering and IT, while Advanced Diplomas are often for paraprofessional work or used as pathways for further learning.

The breadth and depth of knowledge requirements build as a learner progresses to AQF level 7, with graduates requiring broad and coherent theoretical and technical knowledge with depth in one or more disciplines or areas of practice. This is reflective of Australian Bachelor Degrees which sit at AQF level 7. On the whole they offer broad based knowledge, but students specialise as they progress through the degree, with a focus on a specific major/discipline of study.

Progression through NZQF levels 5–7

The NZQF learning outcomes show distinct progress in the changes of knowledge, skill and application, for example, complexity of knowledge increases from level 5 through to level 7.

Levels 5 to 7 is the juncture between the upper end of technical and para-professional qualifications and the lower end of professional qualifications. Given this, the knowledge dimension descriptors are the most complex as they relate to a variety of contexts.

There are four aspects to the knowledge dimension across these three levels:

- Type (operational, technical or theoretical)
- Complexity (broad or specialised)
- Depth
- Breadth (specific field, a field, or one or more fields).

These four aspects allow for the range of qualification types and qualifications on the NZQF with varying purposes to sit at these levels.

AQF level 5 and NZQF level 5

Employment outcomes at level 5 require sound knowledge of industry operations and a broad range of managerial skills to coordinate job operations. Employees may operate independently, have responsibility for others and make a range of operational business decisions.

The expression of the knowledge requirement differs between the AQF and NZQF. The NZQF describes the operational, technical and theoretical knowledge requirements as broad for a specific field of work/study. The language in the NZQF reflects that level 5 is considered the first year of a Bachelor's degree as well as a higher vocational qualification. The AQF requires technical and theoretical knowledge or activity in either a specific or broad area.

The generic skills requirements are similar in both the AQF and NZQF, acknowledging capacity to deal with the routine and the non-routine. However there are differences in the types of problems to be solved by graduates. The AQF requires graduates to provide solutions to sometimes complex and unpredictable problems and the NZQF requires graduates to select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems. The element of complexity at this level in the AQF recognises that AQF level 5 qualifications are the expert qualifications offered in the vocational education and training (VET) sector and the first qualification in the higher education sector.

Both the AQF and NZQF specify a significant level of responsibility in the application of knowledge and skills. The AQF specifies that graduates will demonstrate autonomy, judgement and defined responsibility in changing contexts. The changing contexts are more complex than the NZQF defined contexts. The NZQF requires complete self-management, and some responsibility for the management of others which the AQF outcome does not address.

However, contextual matching shows that the AQF Diploma specification requires an ability to organise work of self and others and evaluate work of teams which is similar to the NZQF specification of having some responsibility for the management of others.

On balance, the learning outcomes for level 5 qualifications in the AQF and NZQF are comparable, if contextual matching of the qualification type descriptors is taken into account.

AQF level 5 and NZQF level 5 are comparable.

AQF level 6 and NZQF level 6

Employment outcomes for graduates with level 6 qualifications are typically at a senior level in an occupation requiring substantial industry knowledge and wide-ranging, specialised managerial skills. Employees may operate independently, take responsibility for others and make a range of strategic business decisions. Qualifications typically prepare students for a para-professional occupation and/or a pathway programme towards a Bachelor's Degree. In New Zealand, level 6 is also considered as a second year of a Bachelor's Degree.

The knowledge outcomes at level 6 on the NZQF and the AQF appear to be significantly different. The NZQF specifies specialised knowledge with depth. The AQF outcome (which is similar to the NZQF level 5 descriptor) requires broad knowledge, but within a specific field of work and learning.

The NZQF's specialised knowledge at level 6 reflects the types and pathways of qualifications at this level. Historically, NZQF level 6 qualifications were generally the highest technical qualifications (for example, engineering and nursing). The NZQF level 6 still retains technical

qualifications at this specialised level (for example, software engineering, mechanical engineering and aeronautical engineering).

If a contextual matching process is used, specialised knowledge in the NZQF outcome can be seen as comparable with the AQF. That is, the purpose of the AQF Advanced Diploma specifies specialised knowledge in a range of contexts and the AQF application statement at level 6 requires capacity to provide specialist advice which implies specialist knowledge.

Both the NZQF and the AQF refer to technical and theoretical knowledge.

The skills outcomes of the NZQF and the AQF are differently worded but are comparable as the concepts demonstrate the same degree of complexity. For example, the NZQF refers to graduates being able to generate solutions at level 6 which reflects the in-depth specialised knowledge of graduates with technical qualifications. This is a comparable level of complexity as being able to provide specialist advice in the AQF.

The Joint Working Group applied the substantial difference test to this level, which involved a comparison of NZQF level 6 with AQF level 7 and AQF level 6 with NZQF level 5.

Contextual matching and application of the substantial difference test concluded that AQF level 6 and NZQF level 6 are comparable.

AQF level 7 and NZQF level 7

Outcomes for graduates with level 7 qualifications are employment, mainly at the entry level for professional practice, and entry to postgraduate studies. Bachelor Degrees sit at level 7 of the NZQF and the AQF. The level 7 learning outcomes on the NZQF and AQF are similar.

The description of knowledge in the AQF and NZQF is almost identical. Both refer to technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more areas of work or study.

Both level descriptors for skills refer to a graduate being able to analyse and generate solutions to unfamiliar/unpredictable and sometimes complex problems.

The application outcomes of the NZQF and the AQF are different in language but are comparable in their level of complexity. Using a contextual matching process, there are four different qualifications on the NZQF at level 7 so the application of knowledge and skills are broader in context to cover the four types of qualifications.

The Bachelor Degree, the flagship qualification on both the NZQF and AQF at level 7, have comparable definitions, purposes, features and progression. Bachelor Degrees on both frameworks prepare graduates for employment/professional practice and postgraduate studies.

AQF level 7 and NZQF level 7 are comparable.

AQF level 8 and NZQF level 8

The outcomes of a graduate's knowledge in both frameworks at level 8 refer to advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in a discipline or area of practice. The NZQF inclusion of a critical understanding of the underpinning key principles is analogous to the skill of analysing critically which is listed in the AQF skills outcome.

The skills outcomes are also similar. Both require graduates to analyse and generate solutions to complex problems and require graduates to apply methods and technologies (AQF) or a range of processes (NZQF).

At this level, both the AQF and the NZQF introduce, in the application learning outcomes, the concept of a graduate's responsibility with respect to the profession or discipline. The AQF requires graduates to apply their knowledge and skills to demonstrate…responsibility as a practitioner or learner, while the NZQF requires graduates to have some responsibility for the integrity of the profession or discipline.

A contextual matching process considered the qualification types at this level and their practical implementation. In both frameworks, the Bachelor Honours Degree has outcomes which include the ability to plan and execute research, while the (Post) Graduate Certificate and (Post) Graduate Diploma[15] represent the extension of the individual's knowledge and skills, whether it be in a new area or by building on existing knowledge and skills. In Australia and New Zealand Bachelor Honours Degrees are a pathway into a Doctoral Degree.

The learning outcomes for level 8 of the NZQF and AQF are comparable, supported by close linkages between the specifications for the qualification types at that level.

AQF level 8 and NZQF level 8 are comparable.

AQF level 9 and NZQF level 9

Contextual matching is vital to compare NZQF level 9 and AQF level 9. The qualification descriptors need to be compared alongside the level outcomes.

There is a close correlation between the summary statements in the AQF and NZQF for level 9 qualifications. Both set out that graduates will apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship, as well as referencing pathways for further learning.

The level 9 knowledge outcomes in the NZQF and AQF are different. The NZQF refers to highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge. In the AQF this is incorporated into the knowledge descriptor for the Masters Degree, which refers to understanding of recent developments in the relevant discipline or professional practice.

The NZQF level 9 skills outcome requires graduates to develop and apply new skills to existing and emerging problems, and the AQF level 9 skills outcome requires that graduates research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice. The AQF incorporates the generation of new skills into the descriptors for the Masters Degree, which include the demonstration of application of knowledge and skills with creativity and initiative to new situations and/or for further learning.

The application outcomes are different. The NZQF refers to responsibility for leadership within the profession, whereas the AQF refers to responsibility as a practitioner. Leadership within the profession is more complex than having responsibility as a practitioner.

15 Australian Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas are postgraduate qualifications. The former AQF Advisory Board undertook a review of higher education qualifications in 2000. The key issue for the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma at that time was whether or not a distinction should be made between the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma for qualifications developing knowledge in a new professional area and a Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma for qualifications developing knowledge in an existing professional area. At the time the distinction was considered to be too difficult to make in practice and had the potential to confuse both employers and students. No change to the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma was made.

In both frameworks, a single qualification type, the Masters Degree, is located at level 9. The Masters Degree qualification type takes three different forms. In the AQF, these are referred to as the Masters Degree (Research), the Masters Degree (Coursework) and the Masters Degree (Extended). These are similar to the NZQF's Master's Degree by thesis, Master's Degree by coursework and Master's Degree by thesis and coursework.

A contextual and social effects matching process which included qualification definitions and outcomes of graduates concurred that Masters' Degrees in Australia and New Zealand are similar.

The substantial difference test was applied to this level, which involved a comparison of NZQF level 9 with AQF level 10 and AQF level 9 with NZQF level 8.

All processes concluded that AQF level 9 is comparable to NZQF level 9, even though the language of the learning outcomes appears different.

AQF level 10 and NZQF level 10

Qualifications at level 10 of the AQF and NZQF represent the highest level of educational achievement in New Zealand and Australia. Graduates at this level can apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice. Qualifications at level 10 are normally the culmination of study which begins at the Bachelor Degree level (level 7).

Both require the generation of new and/or original knowledge and research which is at the frontier of a discipline or area of professional practice.

Both the AQF and NZQF include the concept of skills for critical reflection. The AQF is more detailed in relation to skills, requiring that graduates will have expert, specialised cognitive, technical and research skills. While research skills are not identified in the NZQF skills outcomes, contextual matching reflects that the definition of a Doctoral Degree in New Zealand is a research degree.

In terms of application, the AQF reference to autonomy, authoritative judgement and responsibility as a leading practitioner is similar to the NZQF commitment to professional integrity, although integrity, in the NZQF context, carries an ethical dimension which is slightly different to responsibility and judgement.

A contextual and social effects matching process which included qualification definitions and outcomes of graduates concluded that level 10 qualifications in Australia and New Zealand are similar.

Level 10 qualifications in the AQF and NZQF are moderated in an international setting. They culminate in a thesis, dissertation or equivalent for independent examination by at least two expert examiners of international standing. These experts are external to the enrolling institution, independent of the conduct of research and without conflict of interest, in line with good practice guides. This provides consistency across qualifications and across countries.

AQF level 10 and NZQF level 10 are comparable.

Principle 4:

The NZQF and the qualifications listed on it and the AQF and its qualification types are based on comparable principles and objectives of learning outcomes:

Responses to this principle demonstrate that each country's qualifications frameworks are underpinned by taxonomies of learning outcomes.

Both frameworks are based on learning outcomes.

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework and the qualifications listed on it and the Australian Qualifications Framework and its qualifications are based on comparable principles and objectives of learning outcomes.

The AQF and the NZQF describe learning outcomes emphasising knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills. The learning outcomes are expressed objectively, avoiding reference to learning mode or institutional setting and neutral in relation to specific occupational relevance and to 'fields of learning'. The NZQF and AQF learning outcomes are expressed generically for qualification type/framework level.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of knowledge and skills i.e. what a graduate is expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning. Learning outcomes are used to describe both the levels and qualifications which are part of the qualifications framework. They ensure that the details of qualifications are transparent and standard across the education and training sectors and that users of the frameworks and qualifications understand qualification outcomes.

The comparability of learning outcomes support other decision-making processes, such as qualifications recognition[16] and the judgements detailed in Principle 3.

New Zealand

The requirements for learning outcomes are set out in the NZQF Qualification Listing and Operational Rules (2012). Each qualification listed on the NZQF must have a set of learning outcomes for a particular stated purpose.

All qualifications listed on the NZQF contain outcome statements which describe the knowledge, skills and attributes of a graduate. Each outcome statement must include information on:

Graduate profile: this describes the knowledge, skills, and attributes a graduate will have when they achieve the qualification.

Education pathways: this identifies how the qualification can lead the graduate to other education pathways or qualifications, if relevant.

16 It should be noted that an assessment of comparable learning outcomes in two frameworks does not automatically equate to an assessment that any particular qualifications within those frameworks are comparable.

Employment pathways: this identifies any relevant employment pathways for graduates or any contribution to the community, whānau, hapū, iwi, or hāpori Māori.[17]

As set out in Principle 3 the NZQF is based on learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are defined in terms of what a graduate is expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning.

Knowledge is what a graduate knows and understands. It is described as a progression from 'basic general knowledge' through to knowledge which is 'factual', 'operational', 'theoretical', 'technical' 'specialised' and 'frontier' knowledge.

Complexity of knowledge is described together with breadth and/or depth in the field of study or work.

Skills are what a graduate can do. The dimension of integration, independence and creativity is important to describing skills progression and reflects the degree of familiarity of the task/ problem requiring:

- predictability or unpredictability
- analysis and judgement
- extent to which the processes involved are standardized or require adaptation and innovation.

Skills are described in terms of:

- the type, range and complexity of processes
- the types range and complexity of problems and solutions.

Application of knowledge and skills is the context in which a graduate applies knowledge and skills. Specifically:

- application is expressed in terms of self-management and leadership in a profession or responsibility for the performance of others
- the context may range from highly structured to dynamic.

The learner is progressively more autonomous and more accountable, more responsible for interacting and collaborating with, managing and leading others, within progressively less transparent, more dynamic contexts.

Australia

As outlined under Principle 3, each level and each qualification type in the AQF is defined by a taxonomy of learning outcomes. This requirement is within the AQF. The standards for higher education and VET institutions require that qualifications may only be awarded to students that meet the learning outcomes for that AQF level and qualification type.

The learning outcomes are defined in terms of what a graduate is expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning. They are expressed in terms of the dimensions of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills.

17 The requirement to list qualifications with graduate profiles, education and employment pathways was implemented in late 2011. Therefore, the majority of the current qualifications listed on the NZQF do not list information on graduate profiles, education and employment pathways. Transition arrangements are being put in place to list all qualifications with graduate profiles, education and employment pathways by December 2015.

Knowledge is what a graduate knows and understands. It is described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity as follows:

- depth of knowledge can be general or specialised
- breadth of knowledge can range from a single topic to multi-disciplinary area of knowledge
- kinds of knowledge range from concrete to abstract, from segmented to cumulative
- complexity of knowledge refers to the combination of kinds, depth and breadth of knowledge.

Skills are what a graduate can do. Skills are described in terms of the kinds and complexity of skills and include:

- cognitive and creative skills involving the use of intuitive, logical and critical thinking
- technical skills involving dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments
- communication skills involving written, oral, literacy and numeracy skills
- interpersonal skills and generic skills.

Application of knowledge and skills is the context in which a graduate applies knowledge and skills. Specifically:

- application is expressed in terms of autonomy, responsibility and accountability
- the context may range from the predictable to the unpredictable, and the known to the unknown, while tasks may range from routine to non-routine.

Generic learning outcomes are incorporated into qualifications in the development process and their application is specific to the education or training sector. Generic learning outcomes are the transferable, non-discipline specific skills a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts. The four broad categories of generic learning outcomes recognised in the AQF are:

- basic fundamental skills, such as literacy and numeracy appropriate to the level and qualification type
- people skills, such as working with others and communication skills
- thinking skills, such as learning to learn, decision making and problem solving
- personal skills, such as self-direction and acting with integrity.

A full description of the learning outcomes for the levels and qualification types is available in the *AQF Second Edition* 2013 at www.aqf.edu.au.

Principle 5:

The procedures for inclusion of qualifications on the NZQF and the AQF and/or describing the place of qualifications in the qualifications system are transparent:

Responses to this principle clearly identify the criteria and processes that are used to include qualifications in the qualifications frameworks.

The procedures for inclusion of qualifications as part of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework and the Australian Qualifications Framework are transparent.

Whilst there are clear differences in how qualifications and qualification types are included in the New Zealand and Australian qualifications frameworks, the procedures for inclusion are credible and robust ensuring transparency. Both countries have clear policies, guidelines and quality assurance practices for inclusion of qualifications on the frameworks maintaining valid and meaningful qualifications (see Principle 2).

Principle 2 should be considered alongside Principle 5, to refer to the entire quality assurance processes that underpin trust and confidence in the integrity of the qualifications.

New Zealand

NZQA has transparent rules for listing qualifications on the NZQF. These rules are publicly available and accessible from the NZQA website.[18] There are general requirements for all qualifications, and additional, specific requirements for qualifications at levels 1 to 6.

See the NZQF Qualification Listing and Operational Rules 2012 at http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/nzqf-related-rules/nzqf-qualification-listing-and-operational-rules-2012/1/.

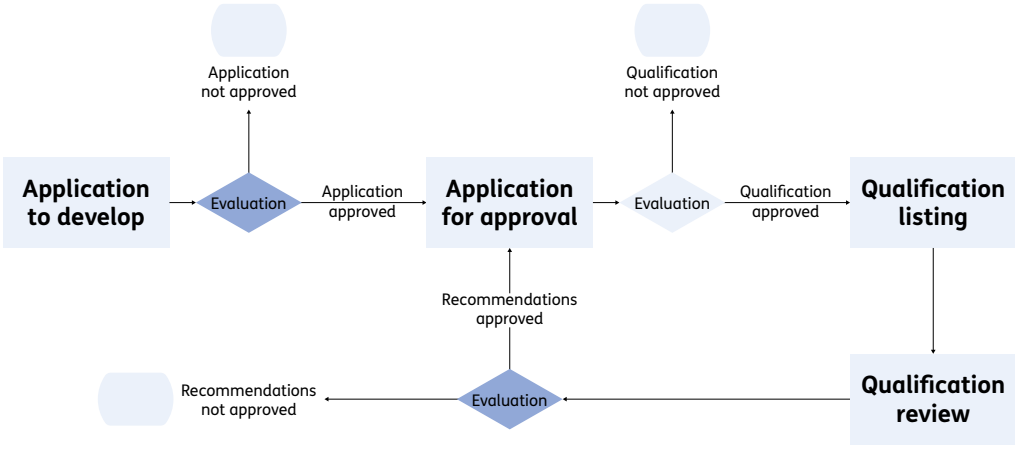
There are four principles underpinning qualification design. These are:

- needs-based
  - Usefulness, relevance and value
  - Learner and industry/community needs
- focused on outcomes
- flexibility
- trust and accountability.

Below is an example of the lifecycle of a qualification. A key component of the qualifications review is involving stakeholders in the development of qualifications. This is to ensure there is appropriate stakeholder support for the development of particular qualifications and that the qualification is needed. Stakeholders include groups like industry, employers and the community.

18 NZQF Listing and Operational Rules 2012

The lifecycle of a qualification application (Qualification levels 1-6)



Requirements for listing qualifications on the NZQF

The listing requirements in s248(2) and s253 of the Education Act 1989 mandate NZQA to make associated rules. The *New Zealand Qualifications Framework Listing and Operational Rules 2012* set out the general listing requirements for qualifications at levels 1 to 10 on the NZQF[19].

All qualifications listed on the NZQF:

- are quality assured
- have the qualification title and details publicly available
- are defined by a qualification type and level
- are allocated a credit value
- have a subject area classification (New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) code, which classifies a qualification into a subject area)
- have a status to indicate whether the qualification is current, expiring or discontinued[20].

Qualifications at levels 7–10 are listed on the NZQF after a successful application for the approval and accreditation of the programme leading to the qualification. This applies to programmes and qualifications from across the whole of the tertiary sector (universities, ITPs, wānanga, and PTEs) and is distinct from the process for qualifications at levels 1–6 in the non-university sector.

Specific additional requirements to list a qualification at levels 1–6 on the NZQF

Within the non-university sector, there are specific additional listing requirements for qualifications at levels 1–6. There is an additional two-step approval process: approval to develop a qualification; and the separate approval to list a qualification. NZQA administers both of these processes.

19 See NZQF Listing and Operational Rules 2012

20 See NZQF Listing and Operational Rules 2012

The additional information required for listing at levels 1-6 includes:

- a **title**, which begins with the legally protected term 'New Zealand'
- a **statement of strategic purpose** that clearly states the qualification's use and relevance to learners, industry and any relevant communities, and must demonstrate the qualification is substantially different to other qualifications listed on the NZQF
- a **specification** which contains mandatory (including quality assurance arrangements, and arrangements for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning) and optional (such as the context for delivery or assessment) conditions for programmes leading to the award of the qualification
- evidence of clear **stakeholder support for the qualification** and involvement in its development, confirming the **national** need for the particular qualification.

The additional listing requirements for qualifications at levels 1-6 reflect NZQA's intention to increase flexibility in the delivery of these qualifications, and to remove any unnecessary distinctions between qualifications apparent in some subject areas under the previous system (e.g. whether a qualification is delivered in the workplace or in the classroom). Specific qualification outcomes at levels 1-6 may be achieved through a variety of means, so the qualification itself is clearly something separate from the programme of study or training leading to it.

There are a number of approaches qualification developers use when deciding the level of a qualification on the NZQF.

The first is to look at the level descriptors of the qualification and evaluate how the descriptors match the level descriptors on the NZQF. This is achieved through a discussion on the role of the qualification, and the knowledge, skills and application of the qualification. Often the 'best fit' principle is applied for this approach.

Another approach is to assess at what level the qualifications needs to sit on the NZQF and develop the qualification around the learning outcomes of that level.

Qualification developers

A qualification must be developed by one or more organisations that NZQA accepts as a legal entity. Those organisations automatically recognised by NZQA include: ITOs, ITPs, PTEs, wānanga, universities and current programme owners.

NZQA and the Ministry of Education are directly involved in developing some qualifications. NZQA develops qualifications for Māori, Pasifika[21], and for generic skills that are not the responsibility of an industry training organisation. The Ministry of Education develops the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) for senior secondary school. Other government agencies may participate in or initiate qualifications development to meet particular government policy objectives.

21 Pasifika are New Zealanders who identify with or feel they belong to one or more Pacific Island ethnicities. The seven largest ethnicities in New Zealand are Cook Island Māori, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan and Tuvaluan peoples. Refer to http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Publications/Strategic-publications/pasifika-strategy09.pdf.

Australia

As outlined under Principle 2, different accreditation authorities are in place for each education and training sector for the purpose of accrediting AQF qualifications. The processes for qualifications to be accredited as AQF qualifications also vary depending on the accreditation status of the institutions awarding those qualifications. While there are variations across the education and training systems, the processes are transparent and regulated by the relevant national regulators.

Some qualification types — the Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma — may be accredited and delivered as either vocational education and training qualifications or as higher education qualifications. The same learning outcomes apply in either case, although there may be differences in approach or emphasis. The sector chosen also determines the relevant accreditation authority and processes.

Note: While the NZQF specifically lists all quality assured qualifications, the AQF does not take the place of a register of each accredited qualification (course) in Australia. The AQF refers to the framework and the qualification types at each level, but does not list all qualifications accredited. The Australian national regulatory bodies maintain two national registers of accredited qualifications for regulatory purposes. The National Register of Higher Education Providers lists qualifications accredited for non self-accrediting institutions by institution and course, as these courses have been through an accreditation process managed by the national regulatory body, TEQSA. However, self-accrediting higher education institutions (universities in the main) accredit courses through their internal robust academic governance processes and therefore courses developed and offered are listed individually by institutions[22]. The VET National Register lists national qualifications developed by Industry Skills Councils and accredited courses, and the institutions approved to deliver them.

Higher education qualifications

Higher education qualifications in Australia are at AQF levels 5–10 and are qualifications of the following types:

AQF Level	Qualification Types
10	Doctoral Degree
9	Masters Degree
8	Bachelor Honours Degree Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma
7	Bachelor Degree
6	Associate Degree Advanced Diploma
5	Diploma

22 Each state and territory has a tertiary admissions centre for student enrolments which lists accredited undergraduate courses for the following year.

As outlined in detail under Principle 2, all higher education qualifications, whether accredited by a self-accrediting institution or by TEQSA, must meet the Standards which are a legislative instrument and are thus publicly available and transparent. The standards set the requirements for internal quality assurance processes, such as course design and approval processes, benchmarking, peer review, assessment processes and external professional accreditation where relevant.

Under the TEQSA Act, TEQSA is required to maintain the publicly available National Register of Higher Education Providers which is the authoritative source of registered higher education providers in Australia and, for non-self-accrediting institutions, also lists each course they are accredited to deliver.

The higher education standards require that institutions maintain adequate records for all of their higher education operations, and that institutions ensure that certification documentation issued is accurate and is protected against fraudulent use.

Vocational education and training qualifications

VET qualifications in Australia are at AQF levels 1 – 6 and 8, and are qualifications of the following types:

AQF Level	Qualification Types
8	Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma
6	Advanced Diploma
5	Diploma
4	Certificate IV
3	Certificate III
2	Certificate II
1	Certificate I

As outlined briefly under Principle 2, Australian VET providers award two main types of AQF qualifications: those developed as components of Industry Training Packages and those accredited by the regulators as accredited courses. Training package qualifications and accredited courses can only be delivered by RTOs that have the qualification or accredited course listed on their VET scope of registration following successful application. In the case of accredited courses, RTOs must also either own the course (i.e. have developed and obtained accreditation for the course) or have permission from the course owner to deliver the accredited course.

Training.gov.au is the official National Register of VET training providers and the qualifications and courses that they are registered to deliver.

The VET Quality Framework requires that RTOs may only issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment to a learner that has met the learning outcome requirements. RTOs are also required to maintain registers of all qualifications and statements of attainment issued to students.

Training package qualifications

As outlined under Principle 2, within the VET system, nationally endorsed qualifications, in training packages, are developed and maintained in consultation with key stakeholders in industry such as employers to ensure they meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals. Part of the process for the development and endorsement of qualifications is to align the industry identified skills and knowledge with the AQF. The development and endorsement process is underpinned by the *Standards for Training Packages 2012* agreed by education and training Ministers. Application of the Standards ensures that training packages are of high quality and meet workforce development needs.

The *Standards for Training Packages* requires that qualifications comply with the AQF specification for that qualification type. This includes compliance with the relevant level criteria and qualification type descriptor.

Accredited courses

As outlined under Principle 2, ASQA and state government regulators in Victoria and Western Australia are responsible for the accreditation of nationally recognised accredited VET courses. Such courses must meet the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012* and the AQF. They must demonstrate that they fulfil a need which is not met by a national training package qualification, or address training in a new or emerging area. A VET accredited course can be accredited for all qualification types recognised under the AQF that are eligible for delivery within the VET sector. The *Standards for VET Accredited Courses* are a legislative instrument under the NVR Act and are thus publicly available and transparent.

Accredited 'courses in'

As above for accredited courses, ASQA and the state government regulators in Victoria and Western Australia can also accredit short courses in accordance with the *National Standards for VET Regulators 2015* and the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012*. These short courses are not AQF qualifications as they are typically a small session of training, formally recognised, but do not have sufficient breadth and depth to meet the requirements of an AQF qualification.

School sector

In the schools sector, all schools are registered with the state and territory government authorities, which are also responsible for accrediting the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE) for their respective jurisdictions. State and territory governments are also responsible for maintaining records of the issuance of the SSCE to graduates.

The SSCE is a multi-purpose award, serving both as a school leaving certificate and to give access to tertiary education in higher education and VET. The SSCE is referred to by different titles across each state and territory. Periodic reviews of the SSCE are undertaken by the relevant state and territory government authorities.

Each state and territory converts an SSCE graduate's results into an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, which is used as the primary criterion for admission to most undergraduate-entry university programmes in Australia. Methodologies for this conversion vary between jurisdictions.

The Australasian Curriculum, Certificate and Assessment Authorities (ACACA) is the national body for the chief executives of the statutory bodies in the Australian states and territories and in New Zealand responsible for certificates of senior secondary education. ACACA provides a national means for monitoring and enhancing developments in senior secondary curriculum and certification.

AQF policy for addition and removal of qualification types

The AQF outlines the policy regarding the addition and removal of qualification types from the framework. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the AQF has the flexibility to respond to Australia's changing education and training needs and also to ensure that changes to the AQF structure do not compromise the integrity of the AQF. The policy covers all education and training sectors that issue AQF qualifications and is published and available to all users of the AQF. The policy notes qualification types can be added or removed where there is a clear industry, professional or community need and sound educational rationale, and the procedures for adding and removing qualification types are clearly outlined in the policy.

Principle 6:

National or regional policies for the validation of all learning, and credit systems, where these exist, are an integral component of the NZQF and the AQF:

Responses to this principle clearly identify each country's policies, and their application, to recognise all forms of learning and student progression through the qualifications system and from study to work.

Policies for recognition of prior learning and credit transfer are integral components of the quality assurance systems that underpin the NZQF and AQF.

Both qualifications frameworks set notional volume of learning requirements for qualifications that may include formal, informal and non-formal training. The NZQF uses a credit value system. A specific credit value system is not a component of the AQF, however most universities use a credit value system.

Education organisations are required to have arrangements in place for assessment of prior learning. They must have clear, accessible and transparent policies and processes to provide pathways and credit to students. Decisions about recognition of prior learning and granting of credit must take into account a students' likelihood of successfully achieving qualification outcomes and ensure that the integrity of qualification outcomes and discipline requirements will be maintained.

New Zealand

Credit recognition and transfer

All qualifications on the NZQF have a credit value. The credit value relates to the size of the qualification. One credit is equal to ten notional hours of learning and assessment i.e.:

- direct contact time with teachers and trainers ('directed learning')
- time spent in studying, doing assignments and undertaking practical tasks ('self-directed' or 'on task' learning)
- time spent in assessment.

All qualifications on the NZQF are 40 or more credits. One year's full-time study at a tertiary education organisation is usually 120 credits. If a learner is studying part-time the credits achieved in a year will be fewer. For learning undertaken in the workplace the credit value may also vary.

An approved programme leading to a qualification can allow for the award of credit for formal (assessed through recognised tertiary education and training courses), informal (incidental, through life experience), or non-formal learning (occurring on the job or through structured programmes, but not leading to qualifications).

NZQA has a policy[23] requiring education organisations to have arrangements for the assessment of prior learning. The policy states that "credit will be recorded for recorded

23 NZQA,Supporting Learning Pathways—Credit Recognition and Transfer Policy, December 2002. Refer www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Studying-in-NZ/Tertiary/creditpolicy.pdf

success, whether or not it forms part or all of a complete qualification". Credit transfer recognises relevant learning that has taken place in another institution or training arrangement: credit already achieved by a student towards a qualification is recognised as credit for comparable outcomes in another qualification. Credit transfer may happen on a case-by-case basis, or as a structured agreement between education organisations. NZQA is currently reviewing credit recognition and transfer (CRT) and recognition of prior learning (RPL) as part of its Future State programme of work.[24]

In the current global environment there will be a persistent and increasing demand for CRT from highly mobile students bringing parts of qualifications from elsewhere. Students may have qualifications, or parts of qualifications, from education organisations in New Zealand or overseas. These other qualifications may or may not conform to the NZQF's system of credit. Students could be domestic or international. People are increasingly likely to seek formal credit for MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses), corporate certification, and personalised learning.

Educational quality is a central component to developing the well-qualified skilled and knowledgeable workforce New Zealand needs to succeed in the globalised economy. Quality assurance will continue to be even more important and necessary to avoid reputational risks, and to build the necessary mutual confidence to enable CRT and RPL.

Successful CRT in this environment requires a quality assurance system that allows education to be constructed around students, rather than students conforming to education that is constructed around a system.

The important considerations for NZQA's work programme are:

- how will partial credit be recognised?
- how will the Record of Achievement be extended to include New Zealand qualifications and approved programmes, *and* other types of learning?
- how will concerns about the validity and quality of RPL decisions be addressed?
- how will parity of esteem between parts of the sector be increased so that factors like institutional uniqueness and trust across different types and modes of delivery or transfer feature less in CRT and RPL decisions?

Australia

A specific credit value system is not a component of the AQF. Instead, AQF qualification types include a notional volume of learning as a dimension of the complexity of a qualification. It is used with the level criteria and qualification type descriptor to determine the depth and breadth of the learning outcomes of a qualification. The volume of learning identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type, and is expressed in equivalent full-time years. It is the responsibility of organisations developing and/or accrediting qualifications to exercise professional judgement to ensure that design of programmes of learning leading to qualifications enables students to achieve the learning outcomes for both the qualification type and the discipline.

At the institution level, the volume of learning may be expressed through qualification course design. Most universities use a credit value system.

24 As at November 2014.

Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

Both the higher education and VET standards set out requirements for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning. These requirements enhance student progression into and between AQF qualifications, recognise the multiple pathways that students take to gain AQF qualifications and that learning can be formal, non-formal or informal, and support the development of pathways in qualifications design. The AQF provides national policy guidance on the application of recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and pathway policy as part of a set of written explanations on the AQF. Providers make decisions based on this guidance and in adherence with national standards that apply in each sector. Providers must be satisfied that students granted credit or recognition of prior learning meet the course requirements, as relevant.

The Higher Education Standards set out that institutions must ensure that they maintain processes to provide for the recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and articulation of awards. The Standards set out that these processes should be designed to maximise the credit students may gain for learning already undertaken, subject to preserving the integrity of learning outcomes and/or discipline requirements of the award to which it applies. There must be clear, accessible and transparent policies and processes to provide award pathways and credit arrangements to students. Institutions must also maintain publicly available registers of formalised credit transfer agreements with other providers and common credit transfer articulation arrangements.

In the VET sector, the Standards for RTOs, Standards for Accredited Courses, and Standards for Training Packages also set out requirements in relation to credit arrangements and procedures for assessment, including recognition of prior learning. For example, the Standards for RTOs set out that an RTO must accept and provide credit to students (unless licensing or regulatory requirements prevent this) where these are evidenced by AQF certification documentation issued by any other RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation. RTOs responsible for delivery and assessment of training components assess RPL as required.

To complement the requirements set out in the legislated standards, the AQF includes the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy* that aims to ensure, in its application by accrediting authorities, qualification developers and institutions delivering qualifications, that credit is available to students for learning already undertaken.

The Policy places the responsibility on providers to ensure they have clear, accessible and transparent policies and processes to provide pathways and credit to students within the requirements that the integrity of qualification outcomes and discipline requirements will be met and their right to make decisions about admission, any prerequisites and the student's ability to successfully complete the qualification.

Similarly the Policy identifies responsibilities for qualification developers and accrediting authorities and that pathways are identified in the early stages of qualification development and accreditation.

Principle 7:

The referencing report has been prepared in consultation with the relevant accrediting and/or quality assurance bodies for New Zealand and Australia

New Zealand

The referencing report has been prepared in consultation with Universities New Zealand.

Australia

The referencing report has been prepared in consultation with the national regulator for higher education, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, and the national regulator for vocational education and training, the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Principle 8:

The referencing process involves international experts to support and assist the development of trusted outcomes

New Zealand

Dr Michael Coles
Consultant International and Qualifications Systems, United Kingdom

The aligning of two independently derived qualifications frameworks is no easy task, even between two countries with strong ties such as New Zealand and Australia. The simple relationship between levels that has emerged is possibly deceptive; to some it will hide the complexity of proving this relationship to the providers and users of qualifications in the two countries. The level-to-level comparison goes well beyond a technical comparison of descriptors. The report shows the care that has been taken to consider the cultural traditions of the two countries, the different use of language for qualifications concepts, different institutional structures, different quality assurance arrangements and different governance arrangements.

The report shows the two country panels coordinating the work have gone beyond seeking similarities between qualifications/levels and have also focussed on the differences between them. The decisions that have been made are based on an agreed 'best fit' to all the evidence available, including the views of stakeholder groups.

The process of comparison has included many bilateral exchanges and national consultations as well as reference to international experts. It has been evident that the emerging agreements are based on ample discussion, further elaborations and internal reflection about workings of the national framework. There has also been a positive response to the reflections of this international expert; I have no outstanding issues with the work.

Based on the experience of qualifications comparison in the UK, in the rest of Europe and in Asia I can write that I am satisfied with the efforts made to carrying out the referencing process and I have confidence in the outcome that links the levels of the NZQF and the AQF.

Australia

Associate Academic Vice-President Andrea Hope
Hong Kong Shue Yan University

The main purposes of the report is to create a 'zone of trust' that will enhance the confidence of stakeholders in the robustness of the quality assurance systems that underpin the two education and training systems and related frameworks, and in the validity of the level to level referencing between the two frameworks. The detailed descriptions of the education systems and quality assurance arrangements in the two countries are clear and well-written and provide ample evidence of robust, well-established and constantly evolving frameworks that promote lifelong learning. The technical referencing process is clearly described, the stages justified and the conclusions clearly stated. The use of contextual and social effects matching to test whether the qualifications and outcomes of graduates compared as closely as the language used in the descriptors is well justified and appropriately employed.

7. Glossary

Adult and Community-based Registered Training Organisations	Australian community-based VET RTOs include major public service organisations such as fire services and hospitals; community service organisations such as major charities, and sporting organisations; and, organisations which have traditionally offered Adult Community Education (ACE) such as adult migrant education centres, adult learning centres, evening and community colleges, and workers' educational institutions.
Best fit	On balance of the relevant factors, a determination of where a qualifications framework level from one qualifications framework most appropriately sits in reference to a level on another qualifications framework.
Credit value system	A credit value system uses a generally agreed-upon value to measure a student workload in terms of learning time required to complete a programme of study, resulting in learning outcomes.
Formal Learning	Learning which takes place in an organised and structured environment, specifically dedicated to learning and typically leads to the award of a qualification. It includes systems of general education, initial vocational training and higher education.
Government Training Establishments	New Zealand government-owned organisations providing education or training (for example, NZ Police Training Services, New Zealand Army).
Industry Training Organisations	New Zealand industry-specific organisations. An ITO sets NZQA-accredited skill standards for their specific industry, and runs industry training that helps learners achieve those standards through education organisations.
Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics	New Zealand government-owned tertiary education organisations. They provide technical, vocational and professional education and training ranging from foundation studies through to full degree and post-graduate programmes, including applied doctorates.

Informal Learning	Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective. Examples of learning outcomes acquired through informal learning are skills acquired through life and work experiences, project management skills or ICT skills acquired at work, languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country, ICT skills acquired outside work, skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports, youth work and activities at home (e.g. taking care of a child).
Non-formal Learning	Learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. student-teacher relationships). It may cover programmes to impart work skills, adult literacy and basic education for early school leavers. Very common cases of non-formal learning include in-company training, structured on-line learning and courses organised by civil society organisations.
Private higher education institutions	Australia has around 120 higher education institutions registered by state and territory authorities or TEQSA to offer particular higher education courses. These higher education institutions offer accredited courses in a range of disciplines generally in a limited number of specialisations. Under the Higher Education Standards Framework these institutions are categorised as 'Higher Education Providers' and they must meet the registration standards in addition to offering at least one accredited course, demonstrating a commitment to quality education and engaging in advanced knowledge and scholarship.
Private Registered Training Organisations	Australia's private VET RTOs are sometimes referred to as private providers. They may be called colleges, schools or institutes and some business or industry associations are also RTOs. The most common fields of study offered by private RTOs are business, computing, hospitality and tourism. Some private RTOs offer assessment services only and do not offer education and training programmes. They provide assessment services for employers who are offering workplace training or are seeking assessment of the skills of their employees in the workplace.

Private Training Establishments	Private training establishments are operated in New Zealand by a wide range of companies, trusts and other entities, and are not publicly owned. PTEs are diverse in terms of their scale, location, and areas of educational expertise. Some PTEs focus on re-engaging learners into education and training while others specialise in vocational education aimed at specific occupations. A few private training establishments deliver research-led degree programmes and postgraduate opportunities.
Public Registered Training Organisations	In Australia, public RTOs include colleges and institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFEs) and a range of specialist institutions. Some schools and universities are also public RTOs. TAFEs are the largest providers of VET in Australia. They are owned and administered by state and territory governments. Some TAFEs are affiliated to universities. TAFEs offer a comprehensive range of programmes on-campus, in workplaces and in schools based on Training Packages or accredited courses that are accredited by ASQA or the relevant state or territory training authority.
Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)	In Australia vocational education and training is offered by RTOs who must comply with the requirements and standards of either the VET Quality Framework. There are almost 5000 RTOs, including TAFE institutes, other government providers, and private providers. RTOs offer programmes leading to AQF qualifications. Some RTOs are also higher education institutions that are accredited to offer higher education qualifications such as Associate Degrees and Bachelor Degrees.
Self-accrediting higher education institutions	Self-accrediting higher education institutions in Australia which are not universities. These institutions are established or recognised under state and territory legislation and can accredit their own qualifications.
Substantial difference	A principle used in the recognition of foreign qualifications where recognition should be granted unless substantial difference is demonstrated by competent authorities. Substantial differences are those that can impact on the suitability of a foreign qualification for various purposes.

Universities	There are eight universities in New Zealand and all are publicly-owned institutions. They undertake a diverse range of teaching and research, especially at a higher level, that maintains, advances disseminates and assists the application of knowledge and develops intellectual independence. New Zealand universities are internationally recognised. All have strong connections with universities in other countries. Australia has 43 universities; 40 Australian universities (37 public and 3 private), 1 Australian university of specialisation and 2 overseas universities. Under the Higher Education Standards framework, all universities must self-accredit, offer undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, undertake research, contribute to higher education outcomes, have good practice in teaching and learning, be involved in the community, and offer high quality higher education.
Workplace-based VET	Australian workplaces may engage an RTO to offer programmes for their employees. Some workplaces may also be RTOs. These are usually known as enterprise RTOs. Workplace-based programmes include workplace training in combination with off-the-job RTO-based training; workplace training only; and no training, only workplace assessment of skills. Workplace training allows the customisation of training programmes to meet the needs of both employers and employees. It gives full-time employees access to learning and employees can receive credit for years of learning on-the-job. It can provide a pathway to a nationally recognised qualification for employees if an RTO is involved in delivery and assessment of the training.
Wānanga	These are publicly-owned tertiary institutions in New Zealand that provide education in a Māori cultural and traditional context. The three wānanga deliver a range of qualifications in a way that recognises Māori world-view and ideas about education. Wānanga offer a range of programmes from adult and community education and youth training to post-graduate degrees.

Appendix A:

Comparison of text in the AQF and NZQF levels

Key to coloured text:
Red — Knowledge / Blue — Skills / Green — Application / Purple — Differences

AQF	NZQF
AQF Level 1	**NZQF Level 1**
Purpose The Certificate I qualifies individuals with basic functional knowledge and skills to undertake work, further learning and community involvement	**Purpose** A Certificate Level 1 qualifies individuals with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and/or community involvement
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have foundational knowledge for everyday life, further learning and preparation for initial work	**Knowledge** Basic general and/or foundation knowledge
Skills Graduates at this level will have foundational cognitive, technical and communication skills to: • undertake defined routine activities • identify and report simple issues and problems	**Skills** Apply basic solutions to simple problems Apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy in highly structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters	**Application of knowledge and skills** Highly structured contexts Requiring some responsibility for own learning Interacting with others

AQF Level 2	NZQF Level 2
Purpose The Certificate II qualifies individuals to undertake mainly routine work and as a pathway to further learning	**Purpose** A Certificate Level 2 qualifies individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a field(s)/areas of work or study
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge of a defined area of work and learning	**Knowledge** Basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study
Skills Graduates at this level will have basic cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply appropriate methods, tools, materials and readily available information to: • undertake defined activities • provide solutions to a limited range of predictable problems	**Skills** Apply known solutions to familiar problems Apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and limited judgement in structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters	**Application of knowledge and skills** General supervision Requiring some responsibility for own learning and performance Collaborating with others

AQF Level 3	NZQF Level 3
Purpose The Certificate III qualifies individuals who apply a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway to further learning	**Purpose** A Certificate Level 3 qualifies individuals with knowledge and skills for a specific role(s) within fields/areas of work and/or preparation for further study
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have factual, technical, procedural and some theoretical knowledge of a specific area of work and learning	**Knowledge** Some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study
Skills Graduates at this level will have a range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a specialised range of methods, tools, materials and information to: • complete routine activities • provide and transmit solutions to predictable and sometimes unpredictable problems	**Skills** Select and apply from a range of known solutions to familiar problems Apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and judgement and to take limited responsibility in known and stable contexts within established parameters	**Application of knowledge and skills** Limited supervision Requiring major responsibility for own learning and performance Adapting own behaviour when interacting with others Contributing to group performance

AQF Level 4	NZQF Level 4
Purpose The Certificate IV qualifies individuals who apply a broad range of specialised knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway to further learning	**Purpose** A Certificate Level 4 qualifies individuals to work or study in broad or specialised field(s)/ areas
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have broad factual, technical and some theoretical knowledge of a specific area or a broad field of work and learning	**Knowledge** Broad operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study
Skills Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a range of methods, tools, materials and information to: • complete routine and non-routine activities • provide and transmit solutions to a variety of predictable and sometimes unpredictable problems	**Skills** Select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and limited responsibility in known or changing contexts and within established parameters	**Application of knowledge and skills** Self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance Some responsibility for performance of others

AQF Level 5	NZQF Level 5
Purpose The Diploma qualifies individuals who apply integrated technical and theoretical concepts in a broad range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning	**Purpose** A Certificate Level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study A Diploma Level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within specific field of work or study
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have technical and theoretical knowledge in a specific area or a broad field of work and learning	**Knowledge** Broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study
Skills Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse information to complete a range of activities • provide and transmit solutions to sometimes complex problems • transmit information and skills to others	**Skills** Select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and defined responsibility in known or changing contexts and within broad but established parameters	**Application of knowledge and skills** Complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts Some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others

AQF Level 6	NZQF Level 6
Purpose The Advanced Diploma qualifies individuals who apply specialised knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning The Associate Degree qualifies individuals who apply underpinning technical and theoretical knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning	**Purpose** A Certificate Level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specialised/ strategic context A Diploma Level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills in specialised/strategic contexts
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have broad theoretical and technical knowledge of a specific area or a broad field of work and learning	**Knowledge** Specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study
Skills Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse information to complete a range of activities • interpret and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems • transmit information and skills to others	**Skills** Analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and defined responsibility: • in contexts that are subject to change • within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions	**Application of knowledge and skills** Complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts Responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts

AQF Level 7	NZQF Level 7
Purpose The Bachelor's Degree provides individuals who apply a broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional work and as a pathway for further learning	**Purpose** A Diploma Level 7 qualifies individuals with specialised and technical knowledge and skills within a professional context A Bachelor's Degree Level 7 provides individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject (or subjects in the case of a double degree or a double major) as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning A Graduate Certificate Level 7 acts primarily as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level A Graduate Diploma Level 7 acts as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced undergraduate level
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent theoretical and technical knowledge with depth in one or more disciplines or areas of practice	**Knowledge** Specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more areas of work or study
Skills Graduates at this level will have well-developed cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse and evaluate information to complete a range of activities • analyse, generate and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems • transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others	**Skills** Analyse, generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems Select, adapt and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well developed judgement and responsibility: • in contexts that require self-directed work and learning • within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions	**Application of knowledge and skills** Advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills in a professional context or field of study

AQF Level 8	NZQF Level 8
Purpose The Bachelor's Honours Degree qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning The Graduate Certificate qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional/highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning The Graduate Diploma qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional/highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning	**Purpose** A Bachelor's Honours Level 8 recognises distinguished study at level 8 A Postgraduate Certificate Level 8 extends and deepens an individual's knowledge and skills A Postgraduate Diploma Level 8 extends and deepens an individual's knowledge and skills by building on attainment in the principals subject(s) of the qualifying degree
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice	**Knowledge** Advanced technical and/or theoretical knowledge in a discipline or practice, involving a critical understanding of the underpinning key principles
Skills Graduates at this level will have advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse critically, evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities • analyse, generate and transmit solutions to complex problems • transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others	**Skills** Analyse, generate solutions to complex and sometimes unpredictable problems Evaluate and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well developed judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner	**Application of knowledge and skills** Developing identification with a profession and/or discipline through application of advanced generic knowledge and skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills Some responsibility for integrity of profession or discipline

AQF Level 9	NZQF Level 9
Purpose A Masters Degree (Research) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning Coursework — individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship and as a pathway for further learning	**Purpose** A Master's Degree Level 9 qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research, a pathway for further learning, professional practice and/or scholarship
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have advanced and integrated understanding of a complex body of knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice	**Knowledge** Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge, and a critical awareness of issues in a field of study or practice
Skills Graduates at this level will have expert, specialised cognitive and technical skills in a body of knowledge or practice to independently: • analyse critically, reflect on and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories • research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice • interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences	**Skills** Develop and apply new skills and techniques to existing or emerging problems Mastery of the field of study or practice to an advanced level
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, expert judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner	**Application of knowledge and skills** Independent application of highly specialised knowledge and skills within a discipline or professional practice Some responsibility for leadership within the profession or discipline

AQF Level 10	NZQF Level 10
Purpose Doctoral Degree qualifies individuals who apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice	**Purpose** A Doctoral Degree Level 10 qualifies individuals to become an increasingly independent scholar who makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge
Knowledge Graduates at this level will have systemic and critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge at the frontier of a discipline or area of professional practice	**Knowledge** Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of study or professional practice
Skills Graduates at this level will have expert, specialised cognitive, technical and research skills in a discipline area to independently and systematically: • engage in critical reflection, synthesis and evaluation • develop, adapt and implement research methodologies to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice • disseminate and promote new insights to peers and the community • generate original knowledge and understanding to make a substantial contribution to a discipline or area of professional practice	**Skills** Critical reflection on existing knowledge or practice and the creation of new knowledge
Application of knowledge and skills Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability and responsibility as an expert and leading practitioner or scholar	**Application of knowledge and skills** Sustained commitment to the professional integrity and to the development of new ideas or practices at the forefront of discipline or professional practice

Appendix B:

An overview of Australia and New Zealand's education and training systems

Australia

Australian education and training system

The Commonwealth of Australia consists of six states and two territories—New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

There are three levels of Australian government: Australian (Federal), state and territory, and local. Education and training is the responsibility of the Australian and state and territory governments.

School education

School education has a similar structure across Australia with only slight variations between states and territories. School education is compulsory between the ages of six and 16 (Year 1 to Year 9 or 10). School education is 13 years and divided into:

- primary school: seven or eight years—Kindergarten/Preparatory-Year 6 or 7
- secondary school: three or four years—Years 7–10 or 8–10
- senior secondary school: two years—Years 11 and 12.

Higher education

Higher education in Australia refers to university and other higher education institutions which award Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level 5 to 10 qualifications. The three main cycles of higher education lead to Bachelor, Master and Doctoral Degrees but there are also sub-degree undergraduate qualifications and postgraduate qualifications.

Qualifications can be taken either full-time or part-time. Distance and online education is common.

There are three types of higher education institutions, also known as higher education providers, in Australia:

- universities
- other self-accrediting higher education institutions
- non-self-accrediting higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions offer Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications.

Recognised institutions can be found on the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency website.

Vocational education and training

Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector is based on a partnership between governments and industry. Governments provide funding, develop policies and contribute to regulation and quality assurance of the sector. Industry and employer groups contribute to training policies and priorities, and in developing qualifications that can deliver skills to the workforce. Australia's national training system provides high-quality and nationally recognised training.

VET qualifications are offered at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels 1 to 6 and level 8. AQF VET qualifications are outcomes-based and focus on the occupational skills and competencies gained. The AQF recognises prior learning or current competence, and makes credit transfer and flexible learning pathways easier. Training Packages and accredited courses provided by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) lead to the following AQF qualifications:

- Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III and Certificate IV
- Diploma and Advanced Diploma
- Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma.

Programme length depends on the student's ability to meet new skills and achieve competencies. This may be affected by skills held before undertaking the programme, the rate of achieving the new skills and competencies and assessment outcomes, and credit transfer/advanced standing used to reduce the length study. Programme duration mentioned below refers to the nominal volume of learning.

The VET sector is flexible, with multiple pathways to and from AQF qualifications. VET can be undertaken in schools, in the workplace, in training organisations, by distance education, by apprenticeship or traineeship or through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Vocational education and training (VET) is offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Generally, only RTOs can issue nationally recognised qualifications and statements of attainment. These institutions must comply with the requirements and standards of either the VET Quality Framework (or the Australian Quality Training Framework). Until 2011, RTOs were registered and quality assured by state and territory registering authorities and the National Audit and Registration Agency.

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) assumed responsibility for the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania when they passed legislation referring powers to the Australian Government. In Victoria and Western Australia, the state registering bodies remain responsible for RTOs that operate only within that state, under their current legislative requirements. RTOs in Victoria or Western Australia that operate in other states or territories or offer VET programmes to international

students under the ***Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*** (ESOS Act) are managed by ASQA. As at 31 December 2014, there were 4,573 RTOs, including TAFE institutes, other government providers, and private providers. RTOs offer programmes leading to AQF qualifications. Some RTOs are also higher education institutions or workplace/enterprise RTOs.

New Zealand

Education and training in New Zealand is the responsibility of the New Zealand Government through the Ministry of Education and NZQA.

School education

School education is compulsory between the ages of six and 16 (Year 1 to Year 11), although 95% of children attend some form of early childhood education before the age of 5. School education is 13 years and generally divided into:

- Primary school — Years 1–6 (ages 5–10)
- Intermediate school — Years 7–8 (ages 11–12)
- Secondary school — Years 9–13 (ages 13–17).

Years 1–13 can be split in a number of ways throughout schools e.g. special schools can offer education at all year groups, composite primary schools offer Year 1–8 education etc.

Tertiary education

Tertiary education in New Zealand includes all post-secondary education, including higher and vocational education.

Tertiary education institutions offer courses which range from transition (school to work) programmes, through to postgraduate study and research. There are no fixed divisions between the types of courses offered by institutions. The focus is on their ability to offer education to the required quality standards, rather than providing education based on the type of institution.

The New Zealand education system does not make distinctions between academic and vocational/technical programmes. All schools in New Zealand deliver an integrated curriculum that covers a broad range of experiences.

There are approximately 180,000 part and full time students in New Zealand.

Government partly funds state tertiary institutions. Students need to contribute about 30 per cent of the cost of their courses.

Technical and vocational education

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) begins at secondary school and continues at Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics, Industry Training Organisations, Wānanga, Private Training Establishments and in the workplace.

At the upper secondary school level students may begin to specialise in vocational learning or may integrate some vocational courses into a more general programme.

Some TVET programmes are also available in government training establishments and several universities.

Wānanga

New Zealand has three Wānanga, which are publicly-owned teaching and research institutions that maintain, advance and disseminate knowledge, develop intellectual independence, and assist the application of knowledge regarding āhuatanga Māori (Māori tradition) according to tikanga Māori (Māori custom).

Wānanga offer certificates, diplomas and bachelor-level degrees, with some providing programmes in specialised areas up to doctoral level.

Universities

New Zealand has eight public state-funded universities. All are well-recognised internationally, have strong international connections and collaborate with universities in other countries on a range of research and teaching programmes.

All New Zealand universities offer a broad range of subjects for undergraduate, masters and Doctoral (PhD) degrees in commerce, science and the humanities. A number of universities have more than one campus (often located in different cities), and many have overseas programmes, usually in partnership with an offshore provider, as a base for delivery of courses. A range of programmes are also delivered online.

Each university is independently managed and governed by its own council drawn from the community, business, staff and the student body, together with local and central government representatives.

All universities offer general degrees with large choices of subjects, but each university also has strengths in specialised professional degrees.

The New Zealand universities receive approximately 40 per cent of their annual income from government grants. The remaining income is split between student fees and other sources, such as research contracts and trading income. There are no privately owned universities.