

## Understanding New Zealand qualifications

Source: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/nzqf/understand-nz-quals/>

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) is the definitive source for accurate and current information on quality assured qualifications in New Zealand. This page provides an overview of New Zealand qualifications: the information you can find on the NZQF about the purpose, types and levels of qualifications. More detailed information for qualification developers is available under [Listing qualifications on the NZQF](#) and [Reviews of qualifications](#).

### Glossary of terms used in the TRoQ process:

**Qualification developer** – an organisation accepted by NZQA as a legal entity that develops qualifications which meet the NZQF listing requirements. Qualification developers are responsible for reviewing the qualifications they develop and for monitoring and reporting on the consistency of achievement.

**Programme owner** – an organisation that develops programmes leading to qualifications on the NZQF that are approved by NZQA.

**Programme provider** – tertiary education providers accredited by NZQA to deliver programmes leading to qualifications on the NZQF

**Qualification graduate profile outcomes** – outline the capabilities of a graduate as a result of achieving a specified programme of study or training leading to the award of a qualification. Graduate profile outcomes define the minimum level of skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes a graduate awarded a qualification can demonstrate.

**Industry training organisation (ITO)** – A body recognised by the Tertiary Education Commission under the Industry Training Act 1992 as having responsibility for setting standards and arranging the delivery of industry training for a specific industry or area of industry identified in a Tertiary Education Commission gazette notice.

**Mandatory stakeholders** – For the purposes of qualification reviews, all or any of the following:

- Existing qualification developers
- ITOs with gazetted coverage, other standard setting bodies, and/or regulatory bodies
- Education providers who are currently delivering programmes leading to the award of qualifications included in the review.

**Qualification** – Formal certification for a given purpose of the achievement of specified learning outcomes to a given standard.

**Programme** – An approved programme is a coherent arrangement of learning or training that is based on clear and consistent aims, content, outcomes and assessment practices, which leads to a qualification listed on the NZQF.

A 'programme' in this document is a "course" in terms of sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989. Programmes of learning must meet the Gazetted Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes.

**Stakeholders** – Individuals, groups, or organisations with an interest (or 'stake') in the outcome of a qualification.

### Titles of qualifications

Over time, new and reviewed qualifications at levels 1-6 listed on the NZQF will have "New Zealand" in their title. The use of the term "National" or a provider name in a qualifications title is being phased out as qualifications are reviewed. "National" will continue to be used to distinguish secondary school qualifications at levels 1-3, namely National Certificates of Educational Achievement. For more information about the development of the NZQF, see [History of NZQF](#).

## Types and levels

### Level descriptors and qualification types on the NZQF

Level	Qualifications Type
10	Doctorate
9	Masters Degrees
8	Postgraduate diplomas and certificates
7	Bachelor Degrees, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates
6	Diplomas
5	
4	Certificates
3	
2	
1	

### Qualification types

All quality assured qualifications listed on the NZQF fit into a qualification type: a certificate, diploma or degree. Each qualification type is defined by an agreed set of criteria which includes the level at which the qualification is listed and the number of credits required at each level. Below is a list of qualification types with linked definitions.

All qualifications on the NZQF are listed in accordance with an agreed set of definitions.

***Certificate and Diploma definitions, see page 5 following.***

### Levels of qualifications

The NZQF has ten levels. Levels are based on complexity, with level 1 the least complex and level 10 the most complex. All qualifications on the NZQF are assigned one of the ten levels. It is possible for qualifications to include credit achieved at levels above and below the overall level at which the qualification is listed.

### Level descriptors table

The table below provides a detailed description of each level in terms of learning outcomes, using common domains and dimensions of progression. Knowledge, skills and application describe what a graduate at a particular level is expected to know, do and be. The term application encompasses responsibility, behaviours, attitudes, attributes and competence.

Level	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	APPLICATION
1	Basic general and/or foundation knowledge	Apply basic solutions to simple problems  Apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Highly structured contexts  Requiring some responsibility for own learning  Interacting with others
2	Basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study	Apply known solutions to familiar problems  Apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study	General supervision  Requiring some responsibility for own learning and performance  Collaborating with others

3	Some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	<p>Select and apply from a range of known solutions to familiar problems</p> <p>Apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</p>	<p>Limited supervision</p> <p>Requiring major responsibility for own learning and performance</p> <p>Adapting own behaviour when interacting with others</p> <p>Contributing to group performance</p>
4	Broad operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	<p>Select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems</p> <p>Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</p>	<p>Self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance</p> <p>Some responsibility for performance of others</p>
5	Broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study	<p>Select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems</p> <p>Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</p>	<p>Complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts</p> <p>Some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others</p>
6	Specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study	<p>Analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems</p> <p>Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study</p>	<p>Complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts</p> <p>Responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts</p>
7	Specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more fields of work or study	<p>Analyse, generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems</p> <p>Select, adapt and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study</p>	<p>Advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills in a professional context or field of study</p>
8	Advanced technical and/or theoretical knowledge in a discipline or practice, involving a critical understanding of the underpinning key principles	<p>Analyse, generate solutions to complex and sometimes unpredictable problems</p> <p>Evaluate and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study</p>	<p>Developing identification with a profession and/or discipline through application of advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills</p> <p>Some responsibility for integrity of profession or discipline</p>
9	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which	<p>Develop and apply new skills and techniques to</p>	<p>Independent application of highly specialised knowledge</p>

	is at the forefront of knowledge, and a critical awareness of issues in a field of study or practice	existing or emerging problems  Mastery of the field of study or practice to an advanced level	and skills within a discipline or professional practice  Some responsibility for leadership within the profession or discipline
10	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of study or professional practice	Critical reflection on existing knowledge or practice and the creation of new knowledge	Sustained commitment to the professional integrity and to the development of new ideas or practices at the forefront of discipline or professional practice

### Outcome statement

All qualifications on the NZQF contain an outcome statement which describes the knowledge, skills and attributes of a graduate.

Different learners will achieve the outcomes in different ways, so outcome statements are an indicator of the minimum achievement expected from a qualification.

Each outcome statement includes the following:

- **Graduate profiles** that identify the expected learning outcomes of a qualification. This is captured in notions of what a learner will know, understand and be able to do when they achieve the qualification
- **Education pathways** that identify other qualifications that a graduate can enrol in after completing this qualification. Where qualifications are stand-alone and do not prepare graduates for further study, the outcome statement should make this clear
- **Employment pathways** (or contribution to the community) that identify the areas in which a graduate may be qualified to work, or the contribution they may make to their community.

### Credit value

All qualifications on the NZQF have a credit value. The credit value relates to the amount of learning in the qualification.

In determining the amount of learning in a qualification, a qualification developer estimates how long it would typically take a person to achieve the stated outcomes in the context specified and to demonstrate that achievement through assessment. This determines the credit value for a qualification. One credit is equal to ten notional hours of learning.

Notional learning hours include:

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

For government funding purposes, a full-time single year programme is equal to 120 credits. However, the credit system allows for a range of ways to structure programmes, which is not limited by the concept of a single-year programme measure.

**Subject area classifications**

All qualifications on the NZQF are assigned a six-digit code from the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) classification system. The NZSCED classifies a qualification into a subject area, which can be used when searching for qualifications in an area of interest.

Information about the NZSCED classification system is available from the Ministry of Education website at [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz)

**Status**

All qualifications listed on the NZQF must display and maintain clear information on the status using the following definitions:

- **Current:** Qualifications that are current are those listed on the NZQF and can be offered by tertiary education organisations.
- **Expiring:** Qualifications that are expiring are those either being replaced with a new qualification or the decision has been made for them to be closed. This will normally be as a result of a review. The qualification may continue to be available to existing students while they complete the programme of study or training path, but no new learners are able to enrol. A time limit will apply to the expiry period.
- **Discontinued:** Qualifications designated as discontinued will no longer be available or awarded.

**QUALIFICATION DEFINITIONS:****CERTIFICATE – a certificate must have at least 40 credits****Certificate level 1****Purpose**

A certificate at level 1 qualifies individuals with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and/or community involvement.

**Outcomes**

A graduate of a level 1 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate basic general and/or foundation knowledge
- apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks
- apply basic solutions to simple problems
- apply literacy and numeracy skills for participation in everyday life
- work in a highly structured context
- require some responsibility for own learning
- interact with others.

**Credit requirements**

This certificate is listed at level 1 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

**Certificate level 2****Purpose**

A certificate at level 2 qualifies individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a field(s)/areas of work or study.

**Outcomes**

A graduate of a level 2 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study
- apply known solutions to familiar problems
- apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- apply literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- work under general supervision
- require some responsibility for own learning and performance
- collaborate with others.

**Credit requirements**

This certificate is listed at level 2 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

### **Certificate level 3**

#### **Purpose**

A certificate at level 3 qualifies individuals with knowledge and skills for a specific role(s) within fields/areas of work and/or preparation for further study.

#### **Outcomes**

A graduate of a level 3 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study
- select from and apply a range of known solutions to familiar problems
- apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- apply a range of communication skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- apply literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- work under limited supervision
- require major responsibility for own learning and performance
- adapt own behaviour when interacting with others
- contribute to group performance.

#### **Credit requirements**

This certificate is listed at level 3 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

### **Certificate level 4**

#### **Purpose**

A certificate at level 4 qualifies individuals to work or study in broad or specialised field(s)/areas.

#### **Outcomes**

A graduate of a level 4 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study
- 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
- apply a range of communication skills relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate the self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance
- demonstrate some responsibility for performance of others.

#### **Credit requirements**

This certificate is listed at level 4 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

### **Certificate level 5**

#### **Purpose**

A certificate at level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study.

#### **Outcomes**

A graduate of a level 5 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study
- 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
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts
- demonstrate some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others.

**Credit requirements**

This certificate is listed at level 5 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

**Certificate level 6****Purpose**

A certificate at level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specialised/strategic context.

**Outcomes**

A graduate of a level 6 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth within an aspect(s) of a field of work or study
- 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
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts
- demonstrate responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts.

**Credit requirements**

This certificate is listed at level 6 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

**DIPLOMA – a diploma must have at least 120 credits, including at least 72 at the level the diploma is listed at.**

### **Diploma level 5**

#### **Purpose**

A diploma at level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within a specific field of work or study.

#### **Outcomes**

A graduate of a level 5 diploma is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study
- 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
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts
- demonstrate some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others.

#### **Credit requirements**

This diploma is listed at level 5. It must contain 72 credits at level 5 and have at least 120 of all credits contributing to the qualification at level 4 or above.

### **Diploma level 6**

#### **Purpose**

A diploma at level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills in specialised/strategic contexts.

#### **Outcomes**

A graduate of a level 6 diploma programme is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study
- 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
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts
- demonstrate responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts.

#### **Credit requirements**

This diploma is listed at level 6. It must contain 72 credits at level 6 and have at least 120 of all credits contributing to the qualification at level 5 or above.