New Zealand

Overview of Higher Education System
The higher education system in New Zealand is subject to the Education Act 1989 and its subsequent amendments. The term ‘tertiary education’ is used to describe all aspects of post-school education and training. There are currently 36 public tertiary education institutions, including eight universities, 21 institutes of technology and polytechnics, three wānanga (Māori tertiary education institutions) and approximately 630 private training establishments, which include private English language schools, registered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

Higher Education Institutions in New Zealand are autonomous and admit students from overseas according to their own admissions criteria. Some professional bodies that require registration also have their own set of admissions criteria.

New Zealand Qualifications Framework
The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) is designed to optimise the recognition of educational achievement and its contribution to New Zealand’s economic, social and cultural success. Specifically, the NZQF:

- Conveys the skills, knowledge and attributes a graduate has gained by completing a qualification
- Enables and supports the provision of high-quality education pathways
- Requires the development of integrated and coherent qualifications
- Enhances confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications
- Contributes to the strengthening of Māori as a people by enhancing and advancing mātauranga Māori
- Represents value for money and is sustainable and robust.

The NZQA administers the NZQF and is responsible for the integrity, currency and accuracy of the NZQF. NZQF qualifications must be at least 40 credits (400 notional learning hours) or more. They must have been quality assured by a recognised quality assurance body to be eligible to be added to the NZQF.

A targeted review of qualifications at levels 1-6 on New Zealand’s ten-level qualifications framework commenced in 2008. The review was initiated in response to concerns raised by employers, employees and unions about the clarity and relevance of qualifications, particularly vocational qualifications. Seven changes were recommended and approved by the NZQA Board, which have now been implemented. Overall, the changes have streamlined and simplified the qualifications system. The establishment of the NZQF as a single location for all qualifications has also made it easier to find information about qualifications. New requirements to list qualifications in the NZQF and for consultation and regular review will ensure that qualifications are fit for purpose and prevent unnecessary duplication and proliferation.

Quality Assurance
Universities New Zealand (Te Pōkai Tara) is the statutory body with primary responsibility for quality assurance matters in the university sector. Two bodies oversee the quality assurance of universities: Universities New Zealand and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).
Zealand’s Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA).

NZQA is responsible for quality assuring all non-university tertiary education organisations and approving qualifications developed by these organisations. Information about quality assurance of non-university tertiary education providers, including external evaluation and review reports of tertiary education organisations, can be found under Providers and Partners on the NZQA webpage.

Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
NZQA’s Qualifications Recognition Services (QRS) assesses international qualifications against demonstrably similar qualifications currently offered in New Zealand, and give applicants an indication as to what qualification their international qualification most closely compares to in New Zealand. In their assessment, evaluators also judge the authenticity of qualification documentation and verify this if unsure. They check the accreditation status of the qualification and/or awarding body or institution in the country (or region i.e. European Union) of origin.

Progress towards Ratification of the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention
The New Zealand Ministry of Education is progressing the ratification instrument through the required legislative processes.

Commitment to Information Sharing Mechanisms
New Zealand has a well-established National Education Information Centre. Part of the responsibilities of this Centre is to maintain the currency of New Zealand information on the UNESCO Portal to Recognised Higher Education Institutions.

Criteria and Procedures for Assessment

NZQA's Qualifications Recognition Services (QRS)
Assesses international qualifications in order to benchmark them to comparable New Zealand Qualifications.

The QRS requires the following documents for assessment:
- Original award certificate
- Original transcripts of results, mark sheets or academic records
- Evidence of vocational or trades training
- Certificate of completion of final year at a general or junior secondary school
- Current practising certificate, registration or licence as appropriate.

These documents must be originals. Translations into English must be provided by a recognised official translation service.

QRS Evaluators take into account:
- The authenticity of the documents
- The function or purpose of the qualification
- Education pathway outcomes (i.e. rights of progression)
- Learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, abilities)
- Levels (on overseas qualification frameworks)
- Workload (academic credits) if applicable
- Key components (e.g. apprenticeship, practicum, dissertation, thesis)
- Entry requirements (e.g. matriculation)
- International benchmarking resources
- Mutual recognition agreements for the qualification at the time of award.

National Education Information Centre (NEIC)

As part of New Zealand's entry to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the NZQA was designated as New Zealand's National Education Information Centre (NEIC). The NEIC provides information and advice on the New Zealand education system, secondary and tertiary qualifications, and recognition of overseas qualifications.

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