

# **TONGA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND ACCREDITATION BOARD**



## **GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION**

**December 2011**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB)'s programme accreditation process is about fostering excellence in the post compulsory education and training (PCET) programmes. A fundamental goal for TNQAB is to help education and training providers meaningfully create the highest quality experience they can for all their learners. Thus TNQAB staff members endeavour to professionally support education and training providers to improve the quality of the programmes they offer for their learners.

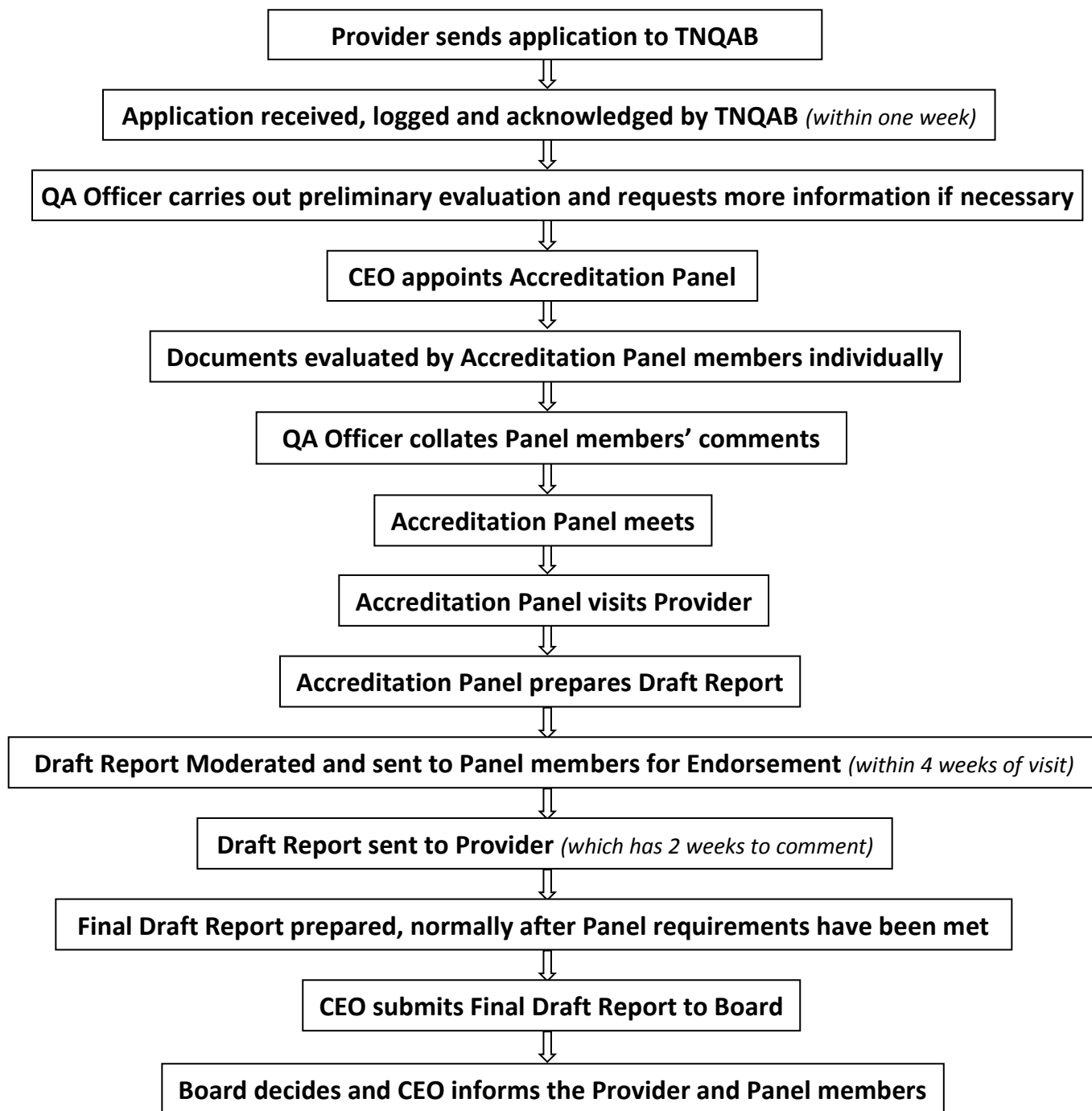
The capacity of any organisation to improve is directly related to its ability to recognise, acknowledge, and act on its identified strengths and limitations. The programme accreditation process is a vehicle that enables providers to improve the learning experience and their performance based on an evaluation of their strengths and limitations. Education and training providers must meet the Registration and Accreditation Quality Standards listed in Appendix A. These set out minimum standards which must be met by PCET providers, which must also demonstrate their engagement in and capacity for continuous improvement.

Policies for programme accreditation are set out in TNQAB's Quality Assurance Policies document, and policies governing qualifications are set out in the Tonga Qualifications Framework Policies document. These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the current approved versions of these documents.

## **2. Overview of Process**

The Board wishes to encourage providers to seek programme accreditation as soon as they are in a position to do so. However it wishes to recognise quality in a positive way, not to find fault and make negative comments which could cause difficulties for the provider and the staff teaching the programme concerned or for the learners who are enrolled in that programme. Consequently premature applications before a provider has a quality management system fully in place will not be considered.

The following flowchart on the next page summarises the process that TNQAB follows when evaluating programme accreditation applications:



### 3. Application

3.1. Every Provider seeking accreditation must submit an application. Such applications should be submitted in electronic format, when possible, and must include the following:

- For each Programme:
  - a complete Programme Accreditation Application Form (see Appendices B1 and B2);
  - a completed Programme Self Evaluation Form (see Appendix C);
  - a Qualification Registration Form (see Appendix D); and
  - a Checklist for the Evaluation of a Qualification (see Appendix E)
- Quality management system manual (or equivalent) and other documents referenced in the Programme Self Evaluation Form(s)
- Payment of the approved fees

3.2. Prior to submitting the application, the Provider may seek advice from TNQAB on any matter concerning the criteria for programme accreditation and the procedure to be used by the Board to evaluate the Provider's application. If you require assistance to complete the form please do not hesitate to contact the Tonga National Qualification and Accreditation Board on telephone 28136.

3.3. Where the Provider already holds accreditation for the programme from an overseas agency<sup>1</sup>, you are invited to submit a copy of the latest accreditation, quality audit report, evaluation or review from that agency, as evidence that the Provider is meeting one or more of TNQAB's programme accreditation criteria. Sufficient evidence must be submitted for TNQAB requirements that are not covered in the overseas agency's quality standards or criteria.

3.4. Your application, and where possible the supporting evidence, should be sent electronically to *tnqab@tnqab.to*. Supporting evidence that is only available in hard copy should be delivered or couriered to Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board, PO Box 65, Nuku'alofa – one copy for each Panel member<sup>2</sup>.

3.5. Please ensure that you have completed all relevant sections and that documents attached to this submission are clearly identified and referenced.

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<sup>1</sup> For example: International Maritime Organisation (IMO); NZ Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality - ITPQuality (via a New Zealand based polytechnic or institute of technology)

<sup>2</sup> Spare copies of these documents will be returned to the Provider after the draft report has been accepted.

- 3.6. On receipt of the application and fee, TNQAB will log the application, acknowledge it and assign a Quality Assurance Officer to evaluate it and request more information if needed.
- 3.7. The CEO, TNQAB will appoint a Programme Accreditation Panel, in accordance with Section 4 below.
- 3.8. After the application is complete, the Quality Assurance Officer will work with the Provider and the Panel Chair to set tentative dates and plan for the Panel visit. Note that the Provider's Head, Principal, Director, CEO or equivalent needs to be available on the visit date as do relevant programme coordinators, teaching staff, students and other key people.
- 3.9. TNQAB retains one copy of the application documentation for its records; other copies in its possession are either returned to the Provider or disposed of confidentially.

#### **4. Programme Accreditation Panel Composition**

- 4.1. Panels for sub-degree level programme accreditation applications are normally made up as follows<sup>3</sup>:
- One or more industry, community or professional representatives, endorsed by national bodies where appropriate<sup>4</sup>;
  - One or more external education and training representatives in the same, or similar, field (for example, from another provider);
  - A TNQAB Quality Assurance Officer.
- 4.2. Panels for degree and postgraduate level accreditation applications are normally made up of the above members plus two university academics, at least one of whom must be from an overseas university. Providers are invited to nominate at least four university academics for selection as members of a degree or postgraduate programme accreditation panel. However, TNQAB reserves the right to select other academics, if it considers them to be more suitable.
- 4.3. Panel nominees must not be connected to the Provider in such a way as to create a potential conflict of interest in the exercise of their task (for example on the Provider's Advisory Committee, teaching part-time for the Provider, involved in the preparation of the application, or have close family connections with the Provider).

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<sup>3</sup> The size of the panel will vary depending on the number and range of programmes being accredited

<sup>4</sup> Such bodies include: Friendly Island Teachers Association; Tonga Nurses Association; Accounting Association of Tonga; Public Service Association; Tonga Chamber of Commerce

4.4. Collectively, the Panel should have the following characteristics:

- Expertise in the field or discipline which corresponds to the scope of the application;
- At least 5 years relevant experience in industry, commerce, the community or the profession;
- Experience, expertise and familiarity with current practice and developments in teaching, learning and assessment (and, for degrees and postgraduate qualifications - research supervision and examination) at the level of the proposed qualification;
- The ability to make impartial judgments on the comparability of the programme with similar ones offered elsewhere in Tonga and overseas;
- The ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the Provider's quality management system in the context of the programme;
- Familiarity with good practice in quality assurance.

4.5. The Panel Chair is either an industry/professional representative or an external education and training representative. The Panel Chair has overall responsibility for conducting the programme accreditation process in accordance with these guidelines; for raising issues with the Provider representative in an appropriate manner; for overseeing the completion of reporting requirements to the standard required; for moderating Panel members' evaluation decisions and for completing the process within the time allocated by TNQAB (or an agreed extension)

4.6. TNQAB's Quality Assurance Officer Panel member participates fully in Panel deliberations and also acts as Secretary to the Panel. Additional members may be co-opted onto the Panel as necessary.

4.7. Panel members are appointed by the CEO of TNQAB on the terms and conditions detailed in the Contract for Accreditors of PCET Programmes (see separate document). All Programme Accreditation Panel members will be required to comply with TNQAB's Code of Ethics (see Appendix F).

## **5. Programme Accreditation Evaluation Procedure**

5.1. TNQAB notifies the Provider of Panel membership and requests a range of potential visit dates. Note that the Provider's Director, CEO or equivalent needs to be available on the visit date, as does the Head of Department (HOD), relevant teaching staff, students and other key people.

5.2. A Programme Accreditation Panel briefing meeting may be held to clarify the process and individual Panel member responsibilities.

- 5.3. Individual members of the Programme Accreditation Panel carry out a preliminary evaluation of the Provider's application against the TNQAB Programme Accreditation Criteria, and submit their comments to the TNQAB Quality Assurance Officer Panel Member, who collates the Panel's comments and requests additional information from the Provider where necessary. Note the proformas available for Panel use – see footnote<sup>5</sup>. Refer also to Contract for Accreditors of PCET Programmes (a separate document) for more details about the roles of Panel members.
- 5.4. In the case of degree or postgraduate accreditation applications, the Panel is also informed by degree accreditation criteria used in overseas universities and by overseas degree accrediting bodies such as the New Zealand Qualifications Authority<sup>6</sup>.
- 5.5. When TNQAB's Quality Assurance Officer is satisfied that sufficient information has been submitted, the site visit date(s) is confirmed.
- 5.6. The Provider drafts a visit agenda which includes the following components, and forwards it to TNQAB for approval:

- a. Brief welcome (allow 15 minutes);
- b. Panel meeting (60 minutes);
- c. Panel meets with Provider's senior management (30 minutes);
- d. Panel meets with programme coordinator and teaching staff (60 minutes);
- e. Panel meets with external advisors/Advisory Committee members (60 minutes over lunch);
- f. Panel tour facilities (30 minutes);
- g. Panel meets with learners (30-45 minutes);
- h. Second meeting with programme coordinator and teaching staff (30 minutes);
- i. Panel meets alone to discuss requirements and recommendations (75 minutes);
- j. Panel gives a verbal report to Provider's senior management and staff (30 minutes).

The times suggested above are only indicative, and in some cases, the programme accreditation panel visit is conducted over two days.

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<sup>5</sup> Programme Accreditation Panel Checklist and Record Form; staff, student and external stakeholder question sheets; programme staffing form

<sup>6</sup> See [www.nzqa.govt.nz/](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/)

## 6. Programme Accreditation Panel Report

- 6.1. After the Panel has visited the Provider, each Panel member drafts a section of the report summarizing the Panel's findings, including requirements, recommendations and commendations, and an overall recommendation to the TNQAB Board. The TNQAB Quality Assurance Officer Panel Member compiles the report, which is then circulated to the other Panel members for their endorsement.
- 6.2. The judgments on which the Panel's requirements (matters of concern requiring a response), recommendations and commendations (for good practices) are based should be objective, fair, accurate, perceptive, rigorous and useful. The Report should be thorough, supportive, transparent, and address all relevant areas without excessive detail<sup>7</sup>.
- 6.3. In the conclusion of the draft report, the Panel recommends, for each programme considered (and for specified delivery sites, where appropriate), that TNQAB Board:
- Accredite the programme for a period of up to two years and register the associated qualification on the TQF; or
  - Accredite the programme for a period of up to two years and register the associated qualification on the TQF, once the Panel's requirements have been addressed by the Provider to the satisfaction of TNQAB; or
  - Not accredit the programme or register the associated qualification on the TQF, specifying the issues that must be addressed by the Provider before the application will be reconsidered.
- 6.4. The TNQAB Quality Assurance Officer sends the draft report for moderation by a person who has not been involved in the accreditation process prior to this stage (for example, another TNQAB staff member or an experienced programme accreditation panel chair)<sup>8</sup>. If the Moderator and QA Officer are unable to agree, the Deputy CEO or CEO of TNQAB decides.
- 6.5. The Panel draft report is sent to Panel members for their endorsement as an accurate account of proceedings, and then sent to the Provider for their comments (to be submitted within two

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<sup>7</sup> See TNQAB Programme Accreditation Report Form

<sup>8</sup> See Programme Accreditation and Qualification Registration Report Moderation Checklist

weeks) with regard to the report's accuracy and the completeness of the evidence on which the Panel's requirements and recommendations are based.

- 6.6. Any issues raised by the Provider are considered by the Panel and, if appropriate, amendments made to the draft report.
- 6.7. Once the Provider has accepted the draft report they are required to submit a response to the Panel's requirements and recommendations. This response should include an action plan and timeline for meeting the Panel's requirements. TNQAB's QA Officer will provide advice if required.
- 6.8. TNQAB's QA Officer may consult with the Panel Chair prior to agreeing to or renegotiating the Provider's action plan and timeline
- 6.9. After the Provider has implemented the action plan, TNQAB's QA Officer adds an appropriate comment to the report and submits it to the TNQAB Board as the Final Draft Report.
- 6.10. TNQAB Board considers the Panel's Final Draft Report, requests further information from the CEO or the QA Officer if necessary, and then makes a decision on the Panel's overall recommendations with regard to programme accreditation.
- 6.11. A letter notifying the Provider of the Board's decision is sent together with the Board approved Final Report.
- 6.12. If the Board's decision is not to accredit the programme, the Provider can resubmit the application to TNQAB as soon as the issues in question have been addressed satisfactorily. The TNQAB CEO may or may not reconvene the Panel prior to writing and submitting a supplementary report to the Board.

## **7. Addressing Panel Requirements**

- 7.1. The programme accreditation panel report often includes one or more requirements to which the Provider must respond. The formal letter sent from TNQAB's CEO to the Provider advising of the accreditation decision will request a response to the requirements within a specified time-frame, usually 30 days.

- 7.2. This response from the Provider may take a variety of forms including the supply of additional information, confirmation that certain actions have been taken, or a reasoned rebuttal of a course of action suggested by the TNQAB.
- 7.3. Once received, this response is referred to TNQAB's Quality Assurance Officer for information and comment.
- 7.4. TNQAB's CEO then writes to the Provider either requesting additional information or confirming that the requirements have been met.
- 7.5. If TNQAB does not receive a response to the requirements within the time period advised in the programme accreditation letter, a further letter is issued to the Provider's CEO requesting an immediate reply.
- 7.6. If no reply is forthcoming within 30 days, a notice of non-compliance is sent to the Provider and a copy placed on the Provider's file. When filing a notice of non-compliance TNQAB may:
- Review the status of the programme accreditation; or
  - Take into account the non-compliance in the next programme accreditation or quality audit of the Provider.

## **8. Conditions on Programme Accreditation**

- 8.1. Every programme accreditation is subject to the condition that the Provider will at all times comply with the relevant TNQAB policies and criteria that are currently in force.
- 8.2. When granting programme accreditation to a Provider, TNQAB may impose other specific conditions.
- 8.3. TNQAB may amend or revoke such conditions at a later date, but only if the Board has first given written notice to the Provider of its intentions, given the Provider a reasonable opportunity to respond to the notice, and considered any submissions made by the Provider in response to the notice.
- 8.4. When conditions are imposed, amended or revoked TNQAB must give notice in writing to the Provider that holds the accreditation of the new, amended or revoked conditions.

## **9. Changes to Accredited Programmes**

9.1. Providers are likely to identify the need to make modifications and enhancements from time to time to TNQAB accredited programmes and/or the associated TQF registered qualifications. The following categories of changes require TNQAB evaluation and approval:

- Change of title or outcome statements of the programme or its associated qualification;
- Introduction of a new delivery mode (e.g. shift from face-to-face to distance delivery);
- Changes to the TQF level or credits of the qualification(s) awarded at the end of the programme.

9.2. Applications for approval of changes to TNQAB accredited programmes and/or TQF registered qualifications must be in writing and include:

- Internal formal approval for the change;
- Details of the changes.

## Appendix A: Registration and Accreditation Quality Standards<sup>9</sup>

For the purposes of this Schedule, “external stakeholders” may include teaching staff from other providers delivering similar courses of study, industry representatives, professional bodies, community representatives or government ministry representatives.

The following are minimum standards for post compulsory education and training providers. A new provider shall meet Standard 1, elements 1.1 to 1.5, before being registered. Accreditation Standard 2, elements 2.1 to 2.6, shall be met for each qualification, course of study and short course prior to delivery. In addition to Accreditation Standards 1 and 2, Accreditation Standard 3, elements 3.1 to 3.12, shall be met by the provider on an ongoing basis.

### ***Accreditation Standard 1:*     **The provider is established and organised to provide quality education and training****

- 1.1 The provider or its governing body is a legally established or recognised enduring body.
- 1.2 The provider has measurable goals and objectives for education and training.
- 1.3 The provider has a coherent, documented quality management system of policies and procedures.
- 1.4 The provider has adequate and appropriate governance and management to achieve its education and training goals and objectives.
- 1.5 The provider’s name is appropriate and does not mislead learners about the nature of the educational and training provision.

### ***Accreditation Standard 2:*     **An educationally sound and effective process is used for the development, approval and review of all qualifications and courses associated with the provider.****

*For each qualification, course of study and short course -*

- 2.1 The title is appropriate and complies with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework.
- 2.2 The learning outcomes have been developed and reviewed, where appropriate, in consultation with relevant external and internal stakeholders.
- 2.3 The learning outcomes and credit requirements are clearly defined and consistent with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework.
- 2.4 The entry requirements are defined and are fair.
- 2.5 The assessment system is appropriate and relevant to the learning outcomes.
- 2.6 There is an appropriate system to moderate assessments.

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<sup>9</sup> Extracted from TNQAB Regulations 2008; TNQAB uses the term “programme” instead of the term “course of study”, which appears in the TNQAB Act 2004 and Regulations 2008

**Accreditation Standard 3: The provider is delivering quality education and training.**

- 3.1 The provider's quality management system is effectively applied to the whole organisation, and is regularly reviewed and updated.
- 3.2 The provider has adequate and appropriate physical and learning resources to deliver its qualifications and courses of study.
- 3.3 Staff qualifications and experience meet the requirements of the Act.
- 3.4 Appropriate staff development plans, based on identified needs, are implemented and outcomes monitored to ensure effectiveness.
- 3.5 Appropriate entry and selection criteria for each course of study and short course are well publicised and applied consistently.
- 3.6 Timely, effective and appropriate student guidance and support systems are provided.
- 3.7 The provider defines and implements effective teaching and learning practices that are educationally sound and appropriate to the course of study and mode of delivery.
- 3.8 Course delivery undertaken in partnership with, on behalf of, or by another organisation either inside Tonga or outside Tonga, meets the standards set in the provider's quality management system.
- 3.9 Any off-site practical or workplace components of courses of study are effective and integrated into curricula.
- 3.10 The assessment of learning outcomes is fair, valid and consistently applied.
- 3.11 Notification of results and reporting on student achievement is adequate and appropriate.
- 3.12 Where degree courses of study are offered, adequate resources and support are provided to meet the provider's defined research goals and objective

## Appendix B1: Programme Accreditation Application Form (Existing Programmes)

These details are required of post compulsory education and training providers applying for accreditation for one or more existing programmes (“courses of study”) leading to one or more qualifications.

<b>A. Provider Details</b>	
Name of education and training provider	
Type of body corporate	
Physical address of education and training premises	
Postal address	
Governing body	
<b>B. Contact Details</b>	
Contact person	
Designation	
Telephone number(s)	
Facsimile number	
Email address	
Website	
<b>C. Programme(s) for which Accreditation is Sought</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For each listed programme, attach a completed TNQAB Programme Accreditation Self Evaluation Form that details evidence that the Provider meets both TNQAB Accreditation Standards 1, 2 and 3</li> </ul>	
<b>D. Education and Training Provider Registration</b>	Yes [✓]
Indicate whether the provider has lodged an application for registration at the same time as its application for programme accreditation (see separate TNQAB application form)	

## Statement of Management Commitment

We, the undersigned, confirm that this application for post compulsory education and training accreditation represents an accurate statement of the current status and operations of our organisation with regard to the courses of study and short courses listed, and is supported by the governing body.

**We confirm** that the governing body has been advised of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board Act 2004 and of Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board policies and procedures of relevance to the activities of the organisation and that to the best of our knowledge these activities comply with relevant requirements therein.

**We confirm** that we have considered any aspects of our operations that may place students or the public at risk and have implemented policies and procedures to ensure their protection.

**Name :**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Representative of the Governing Body]

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date :**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name :**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Principal, Director, Manager etc]

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date :**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Contact details

Please send the completed application form, along with all relevant supporting documentation, to:

Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board

PO Box 65  
Nuku'alofa

## Appendix B2: Programme Accreditation Application Form (New Programmes)

These details are required of post compulsory education and training providers applying for accreditation to deliver one or more new programmes (“courses of study”) leading to one or more qualifications.

<b>A. Organisation/Provider Details</b>	
Name of education and training provider	
Type of body corporate	
Physical address of education and training premises	
Postal address	
Governing body	
<b>B. Contact Details</b>	
Contact person	
Designation	
Telephone number(s)	
Facsimile number	
Email address	
Website	
<b>C. Programmes for which Accreditation is Sought</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For each listed programme, attach a completed TNQAB Programme Accreditation Self Evaluation Form that details evidence that the Provider meets TNQAB Accreditation Standards 1 and 2</li> </ul>	
<b>D. Education and Training Provider Registration</b>	Yes [✓]
Indicate whether the provider has lodged an application for registration at the same time as its application for programme accreditation ( <i>see separate TNQAB application form</i> )	

## Statement of Management Commitment

We, the undersigned, confirm that this application for post compulsory education and training accreditation represents an accurate statement of the current status and operations of our organisation with regard to the courses of study and short courses listed, and is supported by the governing body.

**We confirm** that the governing body has been advised of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board Act 2004 and of Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board policies and procedures of relevance to the activities of the organisation and that to the best of our knowledge these activities comply with relevant requirements therein.

**We confirm** that we have considered any aspects of our operations that may place students or the public at risk and have implemented policies and procedures to ensure their protection.

**Name :**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Representative of the Governing Body]

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date :**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name :**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Principal, Director, Manager etc]

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date :**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Contact details

Please send the completed application form, along with all relevant supporting documentation, to:

Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board

PO Box 65  
Nuku'alofa

**Appendix C: Programme Accreditation Self Evaluation Form**



**Programme Accreditation  
Self Evaluation Form for  
Post Compulsory Education and Training**

***(Addressing the Elements of the TNQAB Registration and Accreditation Quality Standards)***

***Name of Provider:*** .....

***Name of Programme:*** .....

*(One form is to be completed by the Provider for each education and training programme)*

*When completing the form, please ensure that all the documents you refer to are correctly referenced and are either enclosed with your application or can be made available to the TNQAB Programme Accreditation Panel when they visit your organisation. Where verbal evidence is available from students, staff, industry, community groups, etc, please indicate this.*

Name of Provider:

Name of Programme:

**Accreditation Standard 1: The provider is established and organised to provide quality education and training**

TNQAB Quality Standard Element	Demonstrated By	Evidence (documents and/or other information) That Your Programme Meets the TNQAB Criteria	Criteria met? (yes/no)
1.1 The provider or its governing body is a legally established or recognised enduring body.	Evidence of the following (as appropriate):	•	
	a) Registration as a company, charitable trust or similar		
	b) Establishment as a Government of Tonga Ministry or Department, or Public Enterprise under the Public Enterprises Act 2002		
	c) Registration as a Managing Authority under the Education Act 1974		
	d) Other – please specify		
1.2 The provider has measurable goals and objectives for education and training	a) Written statement of the educational purpose, goals and objectives of the provider, including the scope of the education and training that is being conducted and/or planned in the immediate future	•	
1.3 The provider has a coherent, documented quality management system (QMS) of policies and procedures.	a) Evidence of a clear, coherent and systematic set of policies, structures and processes that guide and control management, administrative, teaching and learning related activities to ensure the delivery of quality education and training	•	
	b) Policies and procedures to satisfactorily cover all appropriate elements of the TNQAB Registration and Accreditation Quality Standards		
1.4 The provider has adequate and appropriate governance and management to achieve its goals and objectives	a) Ownership and governance clearly defined	•	
	b) Responsibilities, authorities and lines of reporting clearly defined, and understood by those concerned		
	c) Evidence of financial soundness, such as a statement of financial position signed off by a chartered accountant		
	d) Trust account, or similar, to protect student fees		
1.5 The provider's name is appropriate and does not mislead learners about the nature of the organisation.	a) Evidence of approval to use terms protected by Government legislation or regulations	•	
	b) Provider's name is appropriate for the type of education and training offered		

**Name of Provider:**

**Name of Programme:**

**Accreditation Standard 2: An educationally sound and effective process is used for the development, approval and review of all qualifications and courses associated with the provider.**

TNQAB Quality Standard Element	Demonstrated By <sup>10</sup>	Evidence (documents and/or other information) That Your Programme Meets the TNQAB Criteria	Criteria met? (yes/no)
2.1 The title is appropriate and complies with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework.	a) Qualification purpose statement – qualification characteristic (i)	•	
	b) Qualification title – qualification characteristic (ii)	•	
	c) Rationale for qualification – qualification characteristic (iii)	•	
2.2 The learning outcomes have been developed and reviewed, where appropriate, in consultation with relevant external and internal stakeholders.	a) Outcomes statement – qualification characteristic (iv)	•	
	b) Learning pathways – qualification characteristic (xii)	•	
	c) Support for the qualification – qualification characteristic (xiii)	•	

<sup>10</sup> The Qualification Registration Form and the Checklist for the Evaluation of a Qualification should be completed and appended to this form – Appendices D and E

**Name of Provider:**

**Name of Programme:**

**Accreditation Standard 2:**  
(continued)

**An educationally sound and effective process is used for the development, approval and review of all qualifications and courses associated with the provider.**

<b>TNQAB Quality Standard Element</b>	<b>Demonstrated By<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Evidence (documents and/or other information) That Your Programme Meets the TNQAB Criteria</b>	<b>Criteria met? (yes/no)</b>
2.3 The learning outcomes and credit requirements are clearly defined and consistent with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework.	a) Qualification level – qualification characteristic (v)	•	
	b) Credit value – qualification characteristic (vi)	•	
	c) Qualification components – qualification characteristic (vii)	•	
	d) International comparability – qualification characteristic (x)	•	
2.4 The entry requirements are defined and are fair.	a) Entry requirements – qualification characteristic (viii)	•	
	b) Learning assumed to be in place – qualification characteristic (ix)	•	
	c) Recognition of Prior Learning (where appropriate) – qualification characteristic (xi)	•	
2.5 The assessment system is appropriate and relevant to the learning outcomes.	Assessment standards and methodology for each course within the programme	•	
2.6 There is an appropriate system to moderate assessments	Moderation processes for each of the courses within the programme that ensure that assessments are fair, valid and consistent	•	

<sup>11</sup> The Qualification Registration Form and the Checklist for the Evaluation of Qualifications should be completed and appended to this form – Appendices D and E

Name of Provider:

Name of Programme:

**Accreditation Standard 3: The provider is delivering quality education and training.**

TNQAB Quality Standard Element	Demonstrated By	Evidence (documents and/or other information) That Your Programme Meets the TNQAB Criteria	Criteria met? (yes/no)
3.1 The provider's quality management system is effectively applied to the whole organisation, and is regularly reviewed and updated.	a) The policies and procedures that support the delivery of the programme	•	
	b) Reviews and updates of the above policies and procedures	•	
3.2 The provider has adequate and appropriate physical and learning resources to deliver its qualifications and courses of study.	a) Teaching facilities and other physical and learning resources in place to support programme delivery: ➤ premises, ➤ teaching facilities, ➤ library facilities ➤ equipment , and ➤ other learning resources ( <i>where appropriate</i> )	•	
	b) Implemented procedures to ensure the health, safety and comfort of learners and staff, concerning, for example: ➤ meeting building requirements ➤ safety equipment ➤ safety zones around power equipment ➤ safety zones identified for natural disasters such as earthquake, tsunami etc	•	
	c) Access for learners with special needs to facilities and other physical resources	•	

**Name of Provider:**

**Name of Programme:**

**Accreditation Standard 3 (continued): The provider is delivering quality education and training.**

<b>TNQAB Quality Standard Element</b>	<b>Demonstrated By</b>	<b>Evidence (documents and/or other information) That Your Programme Meets the TNQAB Criteria</b>	<b>Criteria met? (yes/no)</b>
3.3 Staff qualifications and experience meet the requirements of the Act.	a) Teaching staff qualifications <sup>12</sup>	•	
	b) The teacher-learner ratio for each course of the programme	•	
	c) Teaching staff experience and expertise <sup>13</sup>	•	
3.4 Appropriate staff development plans, based on identified needs, are implemented and outcomes monitored to ensure effectiveness.	a) Implemented policies and procedures to appraise and develop teaching and other staff involved with the delivery and support of the programme	•	
3.5 Appropriate entry and selection criteria for each course of study and short course are well publicised and applied consistently.	a) The information about the programme that is available to learners prior to entry	•	
	b) The entry and selection criteria for the programme and how they are publicised and applied	•	

<sup>12</sup> At a minimum, teaching staff should have at least three years experience in the field at the level of the programme and qualification. Minimum qualifications for teachers, trainers and assessors are usually specified in accreditations requirements for the delivery of national qualifications.

<sup>13</sup> Any person teaching on the programme shall hold a registered teaching qualification at least one level higher than the programme, or have been assessed and granted recognition of prior learning where a Board recognised assessor is satisfied that the person has the skills and theoretical knowledge one level higher than the programme. (See TNQAB Act 2004, Clause 12)

Name of Provider:

Name of Programme:

**Accreditation Standard 3 (continued): The provider is delivering quality education and training.**

TNQAB Quality Standard Element	Demonstrated By	Evidence (documents and/or other information) That Your Programme Meets the TNQAB Criteria	Criteria met? (yes/no)
3.6 Timely, effective and appropriate student guidance and support systems are provided.	a) The pastoral care, welfare and academic support services available to learners	•	
	b) The rules, regulations and procedures that are available to learners covering <sup>14</sup> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• withdrawal and refunds</li> <li>• providing feedback for improvement</li> <li>• discipline</li> <li>• complaints</li> <li>• recognition of prior learning (<i>where appropriate</i>)</li> <li>• student fee protection (<i>see 1.4d</i>)</li> <li>• health and safety</li> </ul>	•	
3.7 The provider defines and implements effective teaching and learning practices that are educationally sound and appropriate to the course of study and mode of delivery.	a) The modes of delivery and delivery sites	•	
	b) The teaching and learning methods – they should be appropriate to the nature of the programme, the learning outcomes, the modes of delivery and the learners	•	
	c) The processes being used for monitoring and evaluating programme delivery, including student evaluation of teaching	•	

<sup>14</sup> See explanatory endnote

Name of Provider:

Name of Programme:

**Accreditation Standard 3 (continued): The provider is delivering quality education and training.**

TNQAB Quality Standard Element	Demonstrated By	Evidence (documents and/or other information) That Your Programme Meets the TNQAB Criteria	Criteria met? (yes/no)
3.8 Course delivery undertaken in partnership with, on behalf of, or by another organisation either inside Tonga or outside Tonga, meets the standards set in the provider's quality management system.	a) Effectively implemented contracts and/or memoranda of agreement/understanding between the organisations/providers in place ( <i>where appropriate</i> )	•	
3.9 Any off-site practical or workplace components of courses of study are effective and integrated into curricula.	a) Effectively implanted policies and procedures covering off-site and/or workplace components ( <i>where appropriate</i> )	•	
3.10 The assessment of learning outcomes is fair, valid and consistently applied.	a) Clearly specified standards for assessment are for each course, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria for awarding merit, distinction or other grades</li> <li>• Effective procedures for reassessments and appeals of assessment results</li> <li>• Learners are informed of the above</li> </ul>	•	
	b) Fair and regular feedback to learners on their progress	•	
	c) Moderation processes that ensure assessment is appropriate, fair, valid and consistent, given the stated learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with external moderation requirements (<i>where necessary</i>)</li> <li>• Adequate storage of student work to meet moderation, reassessments and learner appeals requirements</li> </ul>	•	

Name of Provider:

Name of Programme:

**Accreditation Standard 3 (continued): The provider is delivering quality education and training.**

3.11 Notification of results and reporting on student achievement is adequate and appropriate.	a) The systems in place to record and report learner achievement	•	
	b) Learner achievement records that are accessible to individual learners and stored securely	•	
	c) The procedures in place to ensure that feedback to learners is regular, understood, relates to current levels of achievement and supports the learning process	•	
	d) The procedures in place to ensure that completing learners have met all the requirements for the award of the qualification	•	
3.12 Where degree courses of study are offered, adequate resources and support are provided to meet the provider's defined research goals and objective.	a) Defined research goals and objectives that support the programme	•	
	b) Degree and/or postgraduate programme teaching staff engaged in research activities <sup>15</sup> within their areas of expertise	•	
	c) Research activities that are conducted in accordance with recognised ethical and cultural standards and are open to peer and public scrutiny	•	
	d) The research facilities provided, and the amount of time allocated to enable staff and students to undertake relevant research	•	

<sup>15</sup> For TNQAB's definition of research, and staff engagement in research activities, see Appendix G

**Explanatory endnote – Information, rules, regulations and procedures are needed to cover:**

- *Total Costs of Enrolment*: The information provided to all learners before enrolment should include the full cost of tuition and all other course-related costs that may be incurred during the course of study.
- *Withdrawal and Refunds Policies and Procedures*: These must cover withdrawal by a learner prior to and after the programme has started; and cancellation by the provider of a programme before or after it has started.
- *Student Fee Protection*: The information provided to learners must state the arrangements in place for student fee protection, before and after the programme has started (see *Criteria 1.4d*).
- *Recruitment and Enrolment Information*: Enrolment information provided to prospective learners must be clear, complete and accurate. Learners should be informed in writing of the outcome of their application and, if accepted, be given clear and accurate information about start dates, times, venues and contact details.
- *Pastoral Care, Welfare and Learner Support Services*: Learners must be provided with information about welfare and support services both within and outside the provider. The services should include learning support as well as support for personal issues that may impact on the learner's ability to learn and complete their study.
- *Health and Safety Requirements*: Information about the provider's policies and procedures for health and safety.
- *Rules and Regulations*: Copies of the provider's rules and regulations must be available to students. They should include regulations relating to individual programmes if these are different from the overall regulations.
- *Disciplinary Procedures*: Information about disciplinary procedures must clearly describe behaviour that would lead to formal disciplinary procedures being used and should make a distinction between serious and minor misconduct. Information should describe the steps taken when the discipline procedures are implemented.
- *Complaints Procedures*: The provider's internal complaints procedures must be available in writing and made known to students. They should include details of what the learners should do if they wish to make a formal complaint and how the provider will respond and process the complaint.
- *Reassessment*: Procedures for reassessment should be provided to learners. Procedures for reassessment should be clear, detailed and unambiguous to ensure that all learners are treated the same.
- *Appeals of Assessment Results*: Information about appeal procedures must clearly describe the process learners will follow if they wish to lodge a formal appeal about their results. Appeals of assessment results procedures should be different from those for reassessment or for lodging complaints about other matters, and may require independent input to ensure objectivity and lack of bias.
- *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or current competency*: Information about the availability or otherwise of RPL should be provided to learners before enrolment because this may influence their study plans. The provider must clearly state all options available to learners who wish to apply for RPL including the process, time constraints and cost.
- *Publicity Material*: All publicity material must provide a true and accurate representation of the organisation and the programmes and courses it offers. Information about programme accreditation must be accurate.

## Appendix D: Qualification Registration Form

<b>Name of organization</b>	
<b>Qualification Developer</b>	
<b>Qualification Characteristics</b>	
<b>i. Purpose Statement</b>	
<b>ii. Qualification Title</b>	
<b>iii. Rationale</b>	
<b>iv. Outcomes Statement</b>	
<b>v. Qualification Level</b>	
<b>vi. Total Credit Values</b>	
<b>Total weeks of course (including holiday weeks)</b>	
<b>Total weeks (excluding holiday weeks)</b>	
<b>Average teaching hours per week</b>	
<b>Average self-directed study hours per week</b>	

<b>Total study hours per week</b>	
<b>vii. Qualification Components</b>	
<b>viii. Entry Requirements</b>	
<b>ix. Learning Assumed to be in Place</b>	
<b>x. International Comparability</b>	
<b>xi. Recognition of Prior Learning</b>	
<b>xii. Learning Pathways</b>	
<b>xiii. Support for Qualification</b>	
<b>xiv. Delivery modes accredited</b>	
<b>xv. Delivery method</b>	
<b>xvi. Assessment Methods</b>	
<b>xvii. Proposed starting date</b>	

### Appendix 3: Checklist for the Evaluation of a Qualification

#### *Complete checklist for each qualification*

<b>Qualification Title</b>			
<b>TQF No</b>		<b>Provider</b>	

Characteristics	Criteria	Evidence (documents and/or the information that your qualification meets the criteria)	Criteria Met?	
			Provider	TNQAB
i. Qualification Purpose Statement	a. There is clear purpose stated for the qualification		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. The purpose is related to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. The purpose supports the priorities established in the Statement for the Strategic Development Plan Eight (SDP8) of the Government of Tonga		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Qualification Title	a. The title is indicative of the purpose and outcomes of the qualification.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. The title indicates the qualification type (certificate, diploma, etc) and field or sub-field.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. The title indicates the qualification level		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	d. The title is appropriate and complies with qualification definitions		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Rationale for Qualification	a. The rationale shows how the qualification meets specific needs in the sector for which it was developed		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. The range of typical learners is identified and is appropriate		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. Evidence is available of the societal and economic benefits of the qualification		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. Qualification Outcomes Statement	a. Outcomes are clearly stated		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Outcomes for the whole qualification are reasonable and reflect the stated purpose		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. Outcomes for qualification components are logical		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. Qualification Level	a. The level is consistent with the qualification definitions		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. The level is consistent with the outcome level descriptors		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. The level is consistent with the qualification outcome statement		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

vi. Credit Value of the Qualification	<p>a. The total number of credits is shown</p> <p>b. The total credit value of the qualification equals the sum of the credits assigned to the components</p> <p>c. The credit total is appropriate and conforms to qualification definitions</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
vii. Qualification Components	<p>a. For each component descriptor, the purpose, title, credit value, level, learning outcomes and/or defined competencies are clearly stated</p> <p>b. For each component descriptor, the entry requirements, the assessment requirements, the moderation arrangements, and the requirements for successful completion are appropriate for the learning outcomes and/or defined competencies</p> <p>c. The components reflect the purpose, title and level of the qualification</p> <p>d. The qualification structure is reasonable and shows an appropriate balance between compulsory and elective components, theoretical and practical requirements</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
viii. Entry Requirements	<p>a. Any entry requirements or pre-requisite qualifications are stated</p> <p>b. Entry requirements do not unreasonably exclude individuals because of descent, gender, social origin, place of birth, family status, or special needs</p> <p>c. Entry requirements are reasonable for the level of the qualification</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
ix. Learning Assumed to be in Place	<p>a. There is a clear and appropriate statement of the knowledge, skills and understanding that it is assumed the entrants into the qualification will already have</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
x. International Comparability	<p>a. There is a clear and appropriate statement of how the qualification compares with similar qualifications offered internationally</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
xi. Recognition of Prior Learning	<p>a. There is a clear and appropriate statement concerning how the qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through recognition of prior learning</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

xii. Learning Pathways	a. There is a clear and appropriate statement of where the qualification fits into one or more learning pathways		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
xiii. Support for Qualification	a. Evidence is provided to show support for the qualification by relevant, national and, where appropriate, international, industry, professional, academic, community or other interest groups		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. The evidence of support is sufficient		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
xiv. Delivery mode accredited	a. Mode of delivery is clearly identified.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Mode of delivery is appropriate		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
xv. Delivery method	a. Method of delivery is clearly identified.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. use appropriate teaching models, strategies and techniques		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
xvi. Assessment methods	Variety of assessment types are used		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
xvii. Proposed starting date	a. a proposed date in which the course will commence is shown		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
xviii. Formatting	a. plain text, Rich Text Format (RTF), HTML, Microsoft Word 2003 or below, or pdf.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. submitted both in hard copy and in an electronic format		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Checked by:**    **Name:**  
*(On behalf of Provider)*

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Checked by:**    **Name:**  
*(On behalf of TNQAB)*

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date checked:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date checked:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Code of Ethics for Programme Accreditation Panel Members

As a programme accreditation panel member, I agree:

1. To closely follow the processes and procedures detailed in the current version of the TNQAB Guidelines for Programme Accreditation document
2. To be objective, fair and reliable, and to carry out the prescribed duties, roles and responsibilities in a professional manner and to the best of my ability
3. To be receptive to all comments received during programme accreditation processes, but not to be influenced by pressure from individuals or organisations
4. To make every effort to ensure that programme accreditation visits are collaborative and developmental in nature so that they become part of each PCET provider's efforts to continuously improve its internal processes
5. To be open and friendly, and to ensure that meetings are constructive, supportive and non-confrontational
6. To ensure that, to the best of my knowledge, programme accreditation reports do not contain any false or misleading information
7. To avoid participating in programme accreditations where a conflict of interest is likely to occur of a personal, professional or business nature, and to openly declare any such conflicts that may arise
8. To keep confidential all information I receive of a non-public nature, and to respect intellectual property of which I may become aware during my participation in programme accreditations
9. To refrain from intentionally communicating any false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of any programme accreditation
10. To refrain from discussing or disclosing any information relating to any TNQAB programme accreditations unless required by law or authorized in writing by the CEO of TNQAB
11. To cooperate with other programme accreditation panel members and, when appropriate, assist them to develop their programme accreditation skills
12. To avoid public criticism of other programme accreditation panel members
13. To be open to peer review on my performance as a programme accreditation panel member
14. To undertake appropriate professional development so that I continuously improve my knowledge and professional competence as a programme accreditation panel member
15. To act in a professional manner at all times and to avoid any action or comment that could prejudice the reputation of TNQAB

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (TNQAB Panel Member) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

## Appendix G: Research

### 1. Definition<sup>16</sup> of Research

Research is an intellectually controlled investigation which leads to advances in knowledge through the discovery and codification of new information or the development of further understanding about existing information, and practice. It is a creative, cumulative and independent activity conducted by people with knowledge of the theories, methods and information of the principal field of inquiry and its cognate areas(s). Research typically involves either investigation of an experimental or critical nature, or artistic endeavour of the type exemplified by musical composition. The results of research must be open to scrutiny and formal evaluation by others in the field of inquiry and this may be achieved through publication in peer-reviewed books and serials, or through public presentation. Research is often characterised by the identification of fruitful new topics for investigation and unexpected uses for its findings.

Research activities play a vital role in creating an environment in which the optimum teaching and learning processes occur, and in which staff and students are stimulated by the interplay of new ideas and the spirit of enquiry. Learning, at graduate and postgraduate levels, takes place in an environment of developing and advancing knowledge, problem solving, critical evaluation, investigation and an awareness of the limits of enquiry and understanding. Research may be found in the following contexts, although they are not mutually exclusive:

- a. *Basic or fundamental research*: experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge without any particular application or use in view.
- b. *Strategic research*: work which is intended to generate new knowledge in an area which has not yet advanced sufficiently to enable specific applications to be identified.
- c. *Applied research*: work which develops or tests existing knowledge and is primarily directed towards either specific practical objectives or towards the evaluation of policies or practices. Work which involves the routine application of established techniques on routine problems is unlikely to constitute research.
- d. *Scholarship*: work which is intended to expand the boundaries of knowledge and understanding within and across disciplines by the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information, making use of a rigorous methodology.
- e. *Creative work*: the invention and generation of ideas, hypotheses, images, performances or artefacts, including design, in any field of knowledge, leading to development of new knowledge, understanding or expertise.

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<sup>16</sup> New Zealand Qualifications Authority definition, re-approved in 2004

Activities which *may* be equivalent to research if they meet one or more of the definitions (a-c) outlined above include:

- f. *Consultancy*, which involves the deployment of existing knowledge and the application of analytical and investigative skills to the resolution of problems presented by a client, usually in an industrial, commercial or professional context.
- g. *Professional practice*, some of which overlaps with consultancy when conducted at an advanced level. In certain subject areas and professions the theorisation and effectiveness of professional practice are advanced by academic staff who practise and participate in it.

The TNQAB does not regard activity mainly concerned with keeping abreast of new developments in subjects as “research”. It is assumed that providers will, as a matter of course, ensure that all teachers of degree courses have sufficient time to keep abreast of new developments both in their subject areas and in methods of teaching and assessment. All research activities must be conducted in accordance with recognised ethical standards.

## **2. Teaching Staff Engagement in Research**

One of the characteristics of a Bachelor’s degree programme is that it is taught mainly by people engaged in research. Evaluating the quantity and quality of research engagement of academic staff involved in a degree course required to meet TNQAB’s programme accreditation criteria requires judgment on the part of an accreditation panel.

TNQAB considers that at an early stage of development of a research culture, the principles underpinning the requirement for academic staff to be engaged in research may be adequately met by achieving a balance between academic staff in the following groupings:

- i. Staff not yet engaged in research, but engaged in research-informed study;
- ii. Qualifications upgrading, and therefore able to offer teaching that is informed by recent research and inspired by the search for knowledge;
- iii. Staff conducting research as a major component of study towards a higher degree
- iv. Staff engaged in qualification-independent research.

TNQAB considers that while this is acceptable in the early years of establishment of a research culture, there must be planning and projections in place which show how staff engagement in research will grow and progress to a more established pattern of research outputs. These projections should be verifiable and, in relation to the focus of the programme, significant. TNQAB acknowledges that there may be instances, within an established or developing research culture, where individual teachers are appointed for specific contributions to a component of a programme and may individually have no significant current or recent engagement in research. TNQAB expects that in the event of any growth or turn-over of academic staff, new staff appointments would consider the preparedness of applicants to be engaged in research without undertaking a significant period of qualifications upgrading.