# TONGA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND ACCREDITATION BOARD



# TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

## Third Edition 2024

# Contents

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. The Tonga Qualifications Framework and TNQAB

The Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF) is a classification structure indicating the levels and types of quality assured educational qualifications in Tonga.

Responsibility for managing and implementing the TQF lies with the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB) alongside TNQAB's responsibility for coordinating and quality assuring post compulsory education and training (PCET) providers and the programmes of study that they deliver.

Under the TNQAB Act (2020 revised edition), the TNQAB has a duty to 'develop a national qualifications framework for post compulsory education [and] training'. The nature of the national qualifications framework is specified in the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Regulations 2010 Part III Sections 13 and 14, reproduced at **Appendix A**.

The Framework itself is a technical tool that helps to assure quality in PCET education through the accreditation or approval of programmes of study and registration of their associated qualifications. Qualifications with specific names, such as a Certificate in Tour Guiding Level 3, can be registered 'on' the TQF if they meet specific requirements.

The TNQAB maintains the list of registered PCET qualifications registered on the TQF. These include National Qualifications (see Section 3.3.2) and all the post compulsory education and training qualifications available in Tonga whose programmes have been accredited by the TNQAB, including those accredited or by an overseas quality assurance agency recognised by the Board.

The TQF includes several policy statements on how regulated educational qualifications for PCET are to be offered and awarded. Providers of PCET education must meet the TQF Policies in addition to policies stated in the TNQAB Quality Assurance Policies 2023.

This is the Third Edition of the TQF, the previous version having been approved in 2018.

## 1.2. Purposes of the TQF

The Tonga Qualifications Framework:

a) Provides a structure for establishing national equivalence and comparability of regulated PCET qualifications and other learning

b) Supports the international comparability of qualifications and is compatible with qualification frameworks developed and implemented by other Pacific nations and worldwide

c)    Facilitates the understanding of the knowledge, skills, and competencies graduates have achieved through clear level descriptors

d)    Improves the transparency of and access to qualifications;

e)    Facilitates the matching of skills demanded by industry and the supply of skilled workers

f)    Enables the development of a register of quality assured PCET qualifications, to enhance opportunities for labour and educational mobility

g)    Is flexible and able to accommodate the development of new qualification types and specialisations as the need arises

h)    Facilitates the recognition of prior learning, and

i)    Supports the development of lifelong learning through flexible learning pathways.


## 1.3.  Principles for revising the TQF

The principles below have been used in the revision of the TQF.

The TQF aims to be:

**Responsive**: The TQF is responsive to the needs of communities, industry, government and employers for particular types of qualifications

**Collaborative**: The TQF's is designed and implemented through consultation, dialogue, understanding and acceptance of qualifications by PCET providers, industry, government and other stakeholders.

**Outcomes-focused**: The TQF is based on learning outcomes rather than traditional educational inputs. This approach focuses on what learners are expected to know, understand, and be able to do after completing a qualification, thus enhancing the relevance and applicability of educational programs to real-world needs

**Learner-Centric**: The TQF emphasises lifelong learning, to enable learners to pursue their individual learning pathways by moving between different levels and qualifications, allowing for flexibility and personalised learning experiences

**Supportive of international recognition and mobility**: The TQF balances Tonga's needs with regional considerations, including the harmonisation of approaches to enable mutual recognition of qualifications, so individuals can use their qualifications in different contexts or countries. The TQF 2024 has been benchmarked against a wide range of regional and national qualifications frameworks.

**Useful**: The TQF provides standard definitions and policy advice, to aid consistency in the understanding, development, quality assurance and use of PCET qualifications.

## 1.4. Changes in the Third Edition

The Third Edition of the TQF retains the 10 levels of qualifications and their names. It retains much of the content of the Second Edition, including the level descriptors, the characteristics of a qualification and registration of qualifications.

However, the Third Edition gives more emphasis to the Framework itself, and provides additional policy advice for PCET providers and other stakeholders.

The following are some significant changes:

- Framework elements, such as level descriptors, volume of learning and qualification definitions, have been brought together in Part 2, so the nature of the Framework is clearer

- There are some minor wording changes to the level descriptors and qualification definitions, to improve consistency

- There is more discussion of the volume of learning and credit values and more detailed advice on minimum and guideline maximum credit values

- There is information on the alignment of senior secondary school qualifications

- National Standards that are part of National Qualifications can be registered on the TQF as Skill Sets or Micro-Credentials, as credentials but not as qualifications

- There is more guidance for providers on learning pathways and the recognition of prior learning and on credit transfer

- There is more guidance for providers on the authorities for qualifications, naming conventions for qualifications and on issuing certificates and records of results.

- There is additional information on the recognition of overseas qualifications and certifications.

- A new Section has been added on Indigenous Knowledge and Skills.

The Third Edition provides a Glossary of Terms at **Appendix B**.


## 1.5. Expectations of PCET providers

Registered PCET providers are expected to comply with the TQF and its Policies and with associated Guidelines. In particular, PCET providers must:

1. Refer to the TQF in their policies and procedures for the development, approval and review of programmes, including meeting the characteristics of a qualification

2.   Implement a policy on assessment and moderation, including competency-based assessment, to ensure that qualifications are awarded only after learning is validly and reliably assessed

3.   Maximise learning pathways into and from qualifications

4.   Develop and implement a policy and procedure on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

5.   Develop and implement policies on procedures on naming of qualifications and issuing certificates and records

6.   Meet requirements for a change of status for a qualification and with associated changes to programmes.

## 1.6.  Commencement date

The TQF Third Edition 2024 comes into effect on the 4th April 2025.

## 2.  THE FRAMEWORK

### 2.1.  Summary of the TQF

The Tonga Qualifications Framework has five key components:

- Levels (10 levels )

- Level descriptors (generic learning outcomes at each level)

- Volume of learning and credit values

- Qualification definitions

- Credentials (see Section 3.4).

**Figure 1** provides a diagram showing the TQF levels and the types of qualifications and credentials. There are two columns for Qualifications, one for Senior Secondary School Qualifications (see Section 2.2) and one for PCET Qualifications, and a third column for PCET Credentials that can be registered on the TQF.

The TQF is an **integrated** framework for all PCET leading to the granting of formal qualifications. While the terms 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training' (TVET) and 'Higher Education'(HE) are sometimes used to distinguish learning and qualifications at specific levels, these terms do not suggest and should not be used to impose structural barriers in moving between different levels of the TQF.

The TQF assumes that the learning at any level can include both practical and theoretical components that are assessed using competency-based or graded assessment respectively.

The TQF is structured to allow **flexibility** in achieving the learning outcomes, according to guidelines set out in the qualification definition.

Higher level qualifications may include components from levels higher or lower, subject to the qualification definitions and required credit values. For example, a qualification at Level 3 may include components of qualifications from Levels 4 or 2.

The TQF is also structured to provide people with pathways through and between work and further study.

**Figure 1 Summary of the TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

| TQF Level | Senior Secondary School Qualifications | PCET Qualifications | PCET Credentials Skill Set (SS) or Micro-Credential (MC) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Learning pathways to PCET qualifications | Certificate Level 1 | Examples: SS in … (Level 1); MC in… (Level 1) |
| 2 | | Certificate Level 2 | SS in… Level 2) MC in… (Level 2) |
| 3 | | Certificate Level 3 | SS in… (Level 3) MC in… (Level 3) |
| 4 | | Certificate Level 4 | SS in… (Level 4) MC in… (Level 4) |
| 5 | | Diploma | |
| 6 | | Advanced Diploma | |
| 7 | | Bachelors degree; Graduate Diploma; Graduate Certificate | |
| 8 | | Bachelors degree with Honours; Postgraduate Diploma; Postgraduate Certificate | |
| 9 | | Masters degree | |
| 10 | | Doctoral degree | |

## 2.2. School level qualifications of the Ministry of Education and Training

The purpose of showing senior secondary school qualifications aligned to the TQF is to acknowledge that these qualifications, which are governed by the Ministry of Education and Training, are major pathways to PCET qualifications at various levels of the TQF, including entry to Bachelors degree qualifications (levels 5 to 7).

This acknowledgement aids international comparability of qualifications to support Tongan learners who aim to study overseas.

There is not a demonstrated alignment of the learning outcomes of Tongan senior secondary school qualifications with the occupationally focused generic learning outcomes of the TQF. Further work is planned to map the comparability of learning outcomes of these two major areas of formal learning (school and PCET).

## 2.3. Levels and level descriptors

Qualifications are described in terms of levels and level descriptors (learning outcomes) There are 10 levels on the TQF with level 1 having the lowest complexity of learning outcomes and level 10 having the highest complexity of learning outcomes (**Figure 1**).

Learning outcomes state what graduates are expected to know and be able to do following successful completion of a qualification at a specific TQF level. The learning outcomes on the TQF are described in general terms of *knowledge, skills* and the *application of the knowledge and skills* (see **Table 1**).

Knowledge refers to what a graduate knows and understands. Knowledge is described in terms of depth (generalised or specialised), breadth (single topic to multi-discipline), kinds of knowledge (concrete to abstract, segmented to cumulative) and (complexity) combination of the depth, breadth, and kinds of knowledge.

Skills refers to what a graduate can do. Skills are described in terms kinds of skills (cognitive and creative skills, technical skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and generic skills) and complexity of skills (combination of the depth and kind of skills).

Application of knowledge and skills refers to the context in which a graduate applies knowledge and skills. Application of knowledge and skills are described in terms of autonomy, responsibility and accountability and 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.

**Table 1 TQF level descriptors (generic learning outcomes)**

| TQF Level | Knowledge | Skills | Application of skill and knowledge |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Graduates will have functional literacy and numeracy and foundational knowledge for everyday life, further learning and preparation for initial work. | Graduates will have the foundational skills to think, work and communicate in order to undertake defined routine activities and to report simple issues and problems. | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy in highly structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters. |
| 2 | Graduates will have knowledge of basic facts or of operations relevant to work in a defined context and/or for learning | Graduates will have the skills to think, work and communicate in order to apply known or routine processes and known solutions to problems that are familiar. Graduates will have the skills to apply known methods, tools and materials in work or further learning | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills in structured contexts under general supervision in collaboration with others |
| 3 | Graduates will have knowledge of facts and operational procedures and technical knowledge for a defined area of work and/or learning | Graduates will have the skills to think, work and communicate to select and apply solutions to familiar problems using a specialised range of methods, tools, materials in work and/or learning | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills to make judgements about problems under limited supervision with some autonomy. They will be mainly routine and predictable and require collaboration with others. Graduates will take major responsibility for their own learning and performance |
| 4 | Graduates will have knowledge of broad facts and theoretical knowledge, plus technical or operational knowledge related to a specialised or broad area of work and/or learning | Graduates will have a broad range of skills to think, work and communicate to select solutions for known and unknown problems and to apply a range of methods, tools, materials and information to complete a range of routine and non-routine tasks | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and to make judgements in both predictable and unpredictable contexts. Graduates will manage their own learning and take some responsibility for the work and learning of others |

| TQF Level | Knowledge | Skills | Application of skill and knowledge |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Graduates will have specialised technical and theoretical knowledge in a specialised area or a broad work field and/or learning | Graduates will have a broad range of skills to think, work and communicate in order to analyse and find solutions to predictable and unpredictable problems and situations and to communicate this information to others | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills in order to demonstrate autonomy, judgement in a defined responsibility in known and changing contexts and to manage the work performance and/or learning of others |
| 6 | Graduates will have broad theoretical knowledge and deep technical knowledge in a specialised or broad area of work and/or learning | Graduates will have a broad range of skills to think, work and communicate in order to analyse information to complete a range of activities and to find solutions to unpredictable and complex problems and to communicate knowledge, skills and ideas to others to help them solve problems | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills in order to demonstrate autonomy and judgement and take defined responsibility in contexts subject to change and to provide specialist advice and carry out specialist functions. Graduates provide leadership in changing contexts and are able to fully manage their own work performance and/or learning |
| 7 | Graduates will have specialised theoretical and/or technical knowledge in one or more fields of study or work | Graduates will have well developed skills to think and work and to communicate, analyse, evaluate and adapt information to complete a range of activities, generate solutions to complex problems and communicate solutions, knowledge and ideas to others | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and responsibility in self-directed contexts. Graduates are expected to provide specialist advice and undertake specialist functions |
| 8 | Graduates will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more disciplines demonstrating critical understanding of key principles | Graduates will have expert specialised skills to think, work and communicate in order to critically analyse, evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities and to analyse and generate solutions to complex problems and communicate solutions, knowledge, skills and ideas to others | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and well-developed judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a learner or practitioner |

| TQF Level | Knowledge | Skills | Application of skill and knowledge |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Graduates will have advanced understanding of a complex body of knowledge in one or more disciplines or practice areas which is at the forefront of their discipline/practice area | Graduates will have expert specialised skills to think and work in a body of knowledge or practice area in order to analyse, critically reflect and synthesise complex information, problems and theories and to research and apply established theories and interpret and communicate knowledge, skills and ideas to both specialist and non-specialist audiences | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner |
| 10 | Graduates will have knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of study or professional practice which demonstrates a critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge. | Graduates will have expert thinking, technical and research skills in a discipline to critically reflect, synthesise and evaluate ideas and theories, develop, adapt and implement research methods to extend or re-defined existing knowledge or professional practice and to disseminate and promote new ideas to peers and others. Graduates will have the skills to be an independent researcher, scholar or advanced practitioner. Graduates will have generated original knowledge and understanding to make a substantial contribution to a discipline or practice area | Graduates will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability and responsibility as an expert and leading practitioner or academic, showing a sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or practices at the forefront of their discipline or practice area |

## 2.4. Volume of learning and credit values

### 2.4.1 Volume of learning

The volume of learning refers to the amount of learning that learners need to achieve a qualification. It helps to define the complexity of a qualification.

The expected total amount of learning required to complete a qualification at a particular TQF level uses a person's notional learning activities as the basis (a 'workload' model). A required notional volume of learning then can be translated into credit values for individual units within a programme, to help balance learners' workloads.

For the TQF:

- The minimum number of hours for a full year of learning by a learner in Tonga is **1200**.

- The <u>guideline</u> maximum number of hours for a full year of learning by a learner in Tonga is **1600**, although higher volumes may apply in particular disciplines.

These hours include all types of learning activities, including private study by learners. Learning activities may include: reading; participation in lectures, seminars or tutorials; participation in laboratory sessions or demonstrations; online learning activities; conduct of private research; work on individual and group assignments; writing essays; problem-solving and project work; individual consultation with teachers or trainers; practicums, workplace learning; preparation for tests and examinations; and taking tests and examinations.

The use of other means of calculating a volume of learning, such as 'contact hours' spent in lectures or tutorials, is strongly discouraged. A measure such as contact hours does not fit well with flexible or online learning or with a learner-centric approach. It does not help learners to understand that they must contribute to the achievement of their own learning.

The minimum figure of 1200 hours is comparable to the minimum volume of learning in other qualifications frameworks in the region.

The basis for the volume of learning is simple. If learners were expected to study for, say, 30 weeks a year, the expected average weekly workload would be about 40 hours. The figure of 1200 hours suggests that if a learner were taking, say, 8 units per year of study (say 4 per semester), each unit should involve about 150 hours of learning time for an individual learner.

The balance between private study and taught/tutored/facilitated/supervised learning activities will vary by discipline and unit and mode of study (face to face, intensive, online, blended). However, there must always be some activities in any unit where feedback and guidance are provided by qualified teaching staff or – if a practicum or placement – supervised by trained people.

Some institutions may offer 'double degrees', such as a dual Bachelors degree in Arts and Law. The volume of learning for a double degree should of course be greater than for a standard Bachelors degree but it should also be less than the sum of the two degrees taken singly.

### 2.4.2 Credit values

Providers of TQF qualifications must use a system of credit values, setting out how many credits are required to achieve each specific qualification. Credit values are also called credit points.

A credit values system is a way of aligning volume of learning and units within a programme of study leading to a qualification. In Tonga, the total annual learning activity hours above should be used as the basis for establishing a credit values system for each programme of study.

A credit values system helps:

- Institutions to allocate learners' workloads appropriately, by understanding the amount of time to be spent by learners on different units.

- Learners to understand the workloads expected of them, regardless of whether they are studying full-time or part-time

- Transferability of qualifications and units, within and across institutions

- To instil a more systematic approach to planning programmes and units in relation to learners' workloads and the relative importance of different units in a programme

- To avoid curriculum overload, where more and more units are added into a programme

- To ensure that curricula are not 'light on' in terms of expected learning, by being too brief or at lower levels of learning than expected.

In the TQF, **one credit equals 10 hours of learning activity by a learner**. That is, the expected minimum credit value of a year of full-time study would be 120 and a three-year Bachelors degree would require a minimum total of 360 credits.

For qualifications with higher credit values, the required credits for a learner to complete the qualification can vary depending on the entry point. For example, a learner with a two-year advanced diploma in a specific field may only need to complete 120 more credits (at a higher level) to achieve a Bachelors qualification.

The sum of the credit values for all the components (units) that make up the qualification must be at least equal to the total credit value of the qualification.

Institutions delivering approved National Qualifications will follow the credit values allocated to each unit of competency in the qualification. For Provider Qualifications, providers can determine the length of their teaching periods, the number of units in a programme, and the credit values of each unit.

A typical model might use 10 or 15 credits per unit or another number that is easily understood by learners. There can be double or even triple credits for an extended unit, such as a substantial project activity.

A credit values system does not simplify the actual work involved in setting up credit transfer arrangements (Section 3.6.3), as the content of programmes and units need to be examined on a case-by-case basis, as least in the first instance. However, a credit values system will make it easier to understand and translate programmes and units across institutions, especially if there is a system of common credit values.

The required minimum and guideline maximum credits are included in the definition of qualifications in Section 2.4 below. Although learners in competency-based units and programmes take as long as they need to achieve competency, the minimum credit values must be met by PCET providers and others when developing qualifications.

## 2.5. Qualification definitions

Qualification definitions provide the purpose and nature of qualifications at each level, with more detail than the generic level descriptors. The boxes below provide qualification definitions using these key characteristics:

- Title at each level

- Purpose

- Outcomes

- Typical entry requirement (A guideline only: most qualifications will have additional specific requirements. Recognition of prior learning may be available as an alternative pathway.)

- Credit values

- Additional information if required.

| Level 1 | Certificate 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:<br><br>• demonstrate basic general and/or foundation knowledge<br>• apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks<br>• apply basic solutions to simple problems<br>• apply literacy and numeracy skills for participation in everyday life<br>• work in a highly structured context<br>• demonstrate some responsibility for own learning<br>• interact with others. |
| Typical entry requirement | Basic literacy and numeracy skills, some formal education; related work experience |
| Credit values | Minimum 40 at Level 1 or above<br>Guideline maximum 80<br>Examples: |

| LEVEL 1 | Certificate 1 | Certificate 1 | Certificate 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 1 | 40 | 30 | 40 |
| Credits at Level 2 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| *Total credits* | *40* | *40* | *50* |

| Level 2 | Certificate 2 |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Certificate at Level 2 qualifies individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a one or more fields or areas of work or study |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 2 Certificate is able to:<br><br>• demonstrate basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study<br>• apply known solutions to familiar problems<br>• apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study<br>• apply literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study<br>• work under general supervision<br>• demonstrate some responsibility for own learning and performance<br>• collaborate with others. |
| Typical entry requirement | Completion of a relevant Certificate I; basic literacy and numeracy skills, formal secondary education at Grade 9 or 10; related work experience |
| Credit values | Minimum 60 with at least 40 at Level 2 or above<br>Guideline maximum 80<br>Examples: |

| LEVEL 2 | Certificate 2 | Certificate 2 | Certificate 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 1 | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| Credits at Level 2 | 50 | 40 | 40 |
| Credits at Level 3 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| *Total credits* | *60* | *60* | *70* |

| Level 3 | Certificate 3 |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Certificate at Level 3 qualifies individuals with knowledge and skills for one or more specific roles within fields/areas of work and/or preparation. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 3 Certificate is able to:<br>• demonstrate some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study<br>• select from and apply a range of known solutions to familiar problems<br>• apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study<br>• apply a range of communication skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study<br>• apply literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study<br>• work under limited supervision<br>• demonstrate major responsibility for own learning and performance<br>• adapt own behaviour when interacting with others<br>• contribute to group performance. |
| Typical entry requirement | Completion of a relevant Certificate II; completion of formal secondary education at Grade 10 or equivalent; related work experience |
| Credit values | Minimum 60 with at least 40 at Level 3 or above<br>Guideline maximum 120<br>Examples: |

| LEVEL 3 | Certificate 3 | Certificate 3 | Certificate 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 1 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Credits at Level 2 | 20 | 10 | 20 |
| Credits at Level 3 | 40 | 30 | 40 |
| Credits at Level 4 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| *Total credits* | *60* | *60* | *80* |

| Level 4 | Certificate 4 |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Certificate at Level 4 qualifies individuals to work or study in broad or specialised fields or areas, with theoretical and practical knowledge and skill for specialised work or study. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 4 Certificate is able to:<br><br>• demonstrate broad theoretical and practical or operational knowledge in a field of work or study<br>• select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems<br>• select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study<br>• apply a range of communication skills relevant to the field of work or study<br>• demonstrate the self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance<br>• demonstrate some responsibility for performance of others. |
| Typical entry requirement | Completion of a relevant Certificate III; completion of formal secondary education at Grade 11 or equivalent |
| Credit values | Minimum 60 with at least 40 at Level 4 or above<br>Guideline maximum 120<br>Examples: |

| LEVEL 4 | Certificate 4 | Certificate 4 | Certificate 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 1 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Credits at Level 3 | 20 | 10 | 0 |
| Credits at Level 4 | 40 | 30 | 50 |
| Credits at Level 5 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Total credits | 60 | 60 | 80 |

| Level 5 | Diploma |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Diploma at Level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skill within a specific field of work or study. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 5 Diploma is able to:<br><br>• demonstrate broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study<br>• select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems<br>• select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study<br>• demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts<br>• demonstrate some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others. |
| Typical entry requirement | Completion of formal secondary education at Grade 12 or equivalent; completion of a relevant Certificate IV; completion of prior studies at Level 5 |
| Credit values | Minimum 120 with at least 80 at Level 5 or above<br>Guideline maximum 240<br>Examples:<br>Examples:<br><br>| LEVEL 5 | Diploma | Diploma | Diploma |<br>|---|---|---|---|<br>| Credits at Level 2 | 0 | 20 | 0 |<br>| Credits at Level 4 | 20 | 20 | 30 |<br>| Credits at Level 5 | 100 | 70 | 90 |<br>| Credits at Level 6 | 0 | 10 | 20 |<br>| *Total credits* | *120* | *120* | *140* | |

| Level 6 | Advanced Diploma |
| --- | --- |
| Purpose | An Advanced Diploma at Level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills in specialised and/or strategic contexts. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 6 Advanced Diploma is able to:<br><br>• demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study<br>• analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems<br>• select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study<br>• demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts<br>• demonstrate responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts. |
| Typical entry requirement | Completion of formal secondary education at Grade 12 or equivalent; completion of a relevant Diploma Level 5 ; completion of prior studies at Level 6 |
| Credit values | Minimum 120 with at least 80 at Level 6 or above<br>Guideline maximum 240<br>Examples: |

| LEVEL 6 | Advanced Diploma | Advanced Diploma | Advanced Diploma |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Credits at Level 4 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Credits at Level 5 | 10 | 30 | 30 |
| Credits at Level 6 | 100 | 80 | 90 |
| Credits at Level 7 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Total credits | 120 | 120 | 130 |

| Level 7 | Bachelors degree |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Bachelors degree provides individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge and to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning.<br><br>A Bachelors Degree involves at least one sequential study programme in which content s progressively developed such that it might form a basis for postgraduate study and/or professional practice.<br><br>The full degree should specify a spread of credit across levels 5 to 7 so that the qualification demonstrates progression, reflects the requirements of the degree definition and achieves the associated learning outcomes in a way that is appropriate to the subject area. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 7 Bachelors degree is able to:<br><br>• demonstrate intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytic rigour<br>• engage in self-directed learning<br>• demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject<br>• demonstrate the skills needed to acquire, understand and assess information from a range of sources<br>• demonstrate communication and collaborative skills. |
| Typical entry requirement | Completion of formal secondary education at Grade 12 or equivalent; completion of a foundation programme following Grade 12; successful completion of a qualification at Level 5 or Level 6; a certificate IV qualification with relevant experience, |
| Credit values | Minimum 360 in total across Levels 5 to 7, with at least 80 at Level 7 or above. Expected minimum of 480 for a for a four-year Bachelor qualification that includes a Foundation Year, with at least 80 at Level 7.<br><br>Indicative maximum 720 (e.g. six-year degree qualification)<br><br>Examples: |

| LEVEL 7 | Bachelors | Bachelors | Bachelors |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 4 | 0 | 0 | 120 |
| Credits at Level 5 | 120 | 140 | 140 |
| Credits at Level 6 | 120 | 140 | 100 |
| Credits at Level 7 | 120 | 80 | 120 |
| *Total credits* | *360* | *360* | *480* |

| | |
|---|---|
| Additional information | PCET providers are encouraged to seek accreditation of a Diploma (Level 5) and an Advanced Diploma (Level 6) as nested, or entry and exit, qualifications in Bachelors level qualifications, to help learners who have satisfied the requirements for qualifications at Level 5 or 6. These qualifications must meet the learning outcomes and credit value for the qualification at each level. |

| Level 7 | Graduate Certificate |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Graduate Certificate at Level 7 allows an individual to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level. The Graduate Certificate is typically designed as a bridging qualification to Level 8 study for individuals developing educational, professional or vocational knowledge in a new discipline, profession or subject area and/or as a broadening or deepening of skills or knowledge already gained in an undergraduate qualification. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 7 Graduate Certificate is able to demonstrate Bachelors degree outcomes, and demonstrate some outcomes of a Bachelors degree in a new area of study. |
| Entry | Entry is open to Level 7 Bachelors degree graduates. However, those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind may be granted admission. |
| Credit values | Minimum 60 with at least 40 at Level 7 or above. Indicative maximum 120 Examples: |
| Additional information | A Graduate Certificate may provide the basis for postgraduate study. |

| LEVEL 7 | Graduate Certificate | Graduate Certificate | Graduate Certificate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 5 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Credits at Level 6 | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| Credits at Level 7 | 40 | 30 | 50 |
| Credits at Level 8 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Total credits | 60 | 60 | 60 |

| Level 7 | Graduate Diploma |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Graduate Diploma at Level 7 enables an individual to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced undergraduate level. The Graduate Diploma is typically designed as a bridging qualification to study at Level 8, either for degree holders in a new field or as an alternative entry pathway. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 7 Graduate Diploma is able to demonstrate Bachelors degree outcomes, and outcomes of a Bachelor Degree in a new area of study. |
| Entry | Entry is open to Level 7 Bachelors degree graduates. However, those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind may be granted admission. |
| Credit values | Minimum 120 with at least 80 at Level 7 or above<br>Indicative maximum 240<br>Examples:<br><br>Examples:<br><br>*see table below* |
| Additional information | A Graduate Diploma may provide the basis for postgraduate study. |

| LEVEL 7 | Graduate Diploma | Graduate Diploma | Graduate Diploma |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 5 | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| Credits at Level 6 | 40 | 20 | 20 |
| Credits at Level 7 | 80 | 60 | 100 |
| Credits at Level 8 | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| *Total credits* | *120* | *120* | *120* |

| Level 8 | Bachelors degree with Honours |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Bachelors degree with Honours at Level 8 qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake research or professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning. Graduates will have advanced knowledge and skills in the field of study.<br><br>A Bachelors degree with Honours qualification is normally available only to individuals who have achieved highly in a Level 7 Bachelors level qualification and/or shown an aptitude for research. It may be embedded in a Bachelors qualification or a discrete postgraduate degree following a Bachelors Degree. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 8 Bachelor Degree with Honours is able to:<br>• engage in self-directed learning and advanced study<br>• demonstrate intellectual independence, analytic rigour, and the ability to understand and evaluate new knowledge and ideas<br>• demonstrate the ability to identify topics for original research, plan and conduct research, analyse results, and communicate the findings to the satisfaction of subject experts. |
| Entry | Entry to honours study is normally based on achievement of above average performance in the credits within the Bachelors Level 7 degree that are relevant to the proposed honours study. |
| Credit values | Minimum 120 at Level 8 or higher (stand-alone), with a minimum of 30 credits for research. Minimum 480 if embedded within a Bachelor degree, with a minimum of 30 credits for research<br>Indicative maximum 240 (stand-alone).<br>Examples: |

| LEVEL 8 | Bachelors with Honours | Bachelors with Honours | Bachelors with Honours |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 5 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Credits at Level 7 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Credits at Level 8 | 120 | 90 | 120 |
| Credits at Level 9 | 0 | 30 | 0 |
| *Total credits* | *120* | *120* | *140* |

| Additional information | Achieved to an appropriate standard, a Bachelor Honours Degree should prepare graduates for admission to further postgraduate study. |
|---|---|

| Level 8 | Postgraduate Certificate |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Postgraduate Certificate at Level 8 extends and deepens an individual's knowledge and skills. It builds upon existing skills and knowledge from a specified subject, usually gained in a Bachelors degree in the same area. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 8 Postgraduate Certificate is able to show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice. |
| Entry | Completion of a Bachelors Degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma in a cognate subject, or relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience. |
| Credit values | Minimum 60 at Level 8 or higher<br>Indicative maximum 120<br>Examples: |
| Additional information | A Postgraduate Certificate provides the basis for further postgraduate study. |

| LEVEL 8 | Postgraduate Certificate | Postgraduate Certificate | Postgraduate Certificate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Credits at Level 7 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Credits at Level 6 | 60 | 40 | 60 |
| Credits at Level 9 | 0 | 20 | 20 |
| Total credits | 60 | 70 | 80 |

| Level 8 | Postgraduate Diploma |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Postgraduate Diploma at Level 8 extends and deepens an individual's knowledge and skills. It builds upon existing skills and knowledge from specified subjects, usually gained in a Bachelors degree, Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate or a Postgraduate Certificate. The qualification can prepare individuals for independent research and scholarship in a specific subject. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 8 Postgraduate Diploma is able to:<br>• show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice<br>• engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving. |
| Entry | Completion of a relevant Bachelor Degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma, or a Postgraduate Certificate, or equivalent relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience. |
| Credit values | Minimum 120 with at least 80 at Level 8 or higher<br>Indicative maximum 240<br>Examples:<br><br>| LEVEL 8 | Postgraduate Diploma | Postgraduate Diploma | Postgraduate Diploma |<br>|---|---|---|---|<br>| Credits at Level 6 | 0 | 10 | 0 |<br>| Credits at Level 7 | 0 | 30 | 0 |<br>| Credits at Level 8 | 120 | 80 | 90 |<br>| Credits at Level 9 | 0 | 0 | 30 |<br>| Total credits | 120 | 120 | 120 | |
| Additional information | A Postgraduate Diploma provides the basis for further postgraduate study, normally including entry to a Masters degree. |

| Level 9 | Masters degree |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Masters degree 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. <br><br> A Masters degree usually builds on a Bachelors degree, Graduate Diploma, Bachelors with Honours degree or a Postgraduate Diploma in a specific area. It may also build on extensive relevant professional experience. The outcomes are demonstrably in advance of undergraduate study, and require individuals to engage in research and/or advanced scholarship. Masters degrees are constituted in one discipline or coherent programme of study. |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 9 Masters degree is able to: <br><br> • show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice <br> • demonstrate mastery of sophisticated theoretical subject matter <br> • evaluate critically the findings and discussions in the literature <br> • research, analyse and argue from evidence <br> • work independently and apply knowledge to new situations <br> • engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving. <br><br> If a Masters Degree includes a component of supervised research of not fewer than 90 credits at level 9, the graduate is also able to: <br> • demonstrate a high order of skill in the planning, execution and completion of a piece of original research or creative scholarly work <br> • apply such skills learned during the study programme to new situations. <br><br> The research should be completed to internationally recognised standards and demonstrate that the graduate has a capacity for independent thinking. |
| Entry | Completion of a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Bachelors Honours degree at Level 8; completion of a Bachelors degree or equivalent at Level 7. |
| Credit values | Minimum 180 with at least 120 at Level 9 (stand-alone or with nested postgraduate qualifications) <br> Minimum 120 at Level 9 following directly from a Bachelor degree with Honours qualification <br> Guideline maximum 240 for many Masters degrees <br> Guideline maximum 600 for graduate-entry professional programmes in health sciences or law. |

| Examples: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| LEVEL 9 | Masters | Masters | Masters after Bachelors with honours |
| Credits at Level 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Credits at Level 8 | 60 | 120 | 120 |
| Credits at Level 9 | 120 | 120 | 120 |
| *Total credits* | *180* | *240* | *120* |

| Additional information | There are three broad types of Masters degree at Level 9. |
|---|---|

**Additional information**

There are three broad types of Masters degree at Level 9.

The 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. This qualification can include coursework units as well as research.

Normally, at least 70% of the credits required for the qualification would be through a research policy for the qualification to be called a Masters Degree (Research), that is, at least 85 credits.

The research should be completed to internationally recognised standards and demonstrate that the graduate has a capacity for independent thinking.

The Masters degree (coursework) qualifies 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. It may include a mini-thesis or a substantial project.

The Masters degree (extended) is a longer form of Masters degree, solely or primarily by coursework, for preparation for professional practice in fields such as law, medicine, physiotherapy, speech pathology, social work or other professional fields. These degrees are typically three to five years in duration when studied full-time.

A Masters qualification may not be referred to as a doctoral degree in any written, oral or electronic information, with the following exceptions:

- The use of the qualification title 'Juris Doctor' is permitted for a Masters degree for legal practice.
- The use of the qualification title 'Doctor of ...' is permitted for a Masters degree for the following professions: medical practice; physiotherapy; dentistry; optometry and veterinary practice.

| | A person who holds a Masters degree achieved to an appropriate standard, that includes a research component, may be considered for admission to a programme of advanced study and/or original research leading to a Doctoral degree. |
| | PCET providers are encouraged to seek accreditation of a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma (Level 8) as nested, or entry and exit, qualifications in coursework Masters qualifications. These nested qualifications must meet the learning outcomes and credit value for the qualification at Level 8. |

| Level 10 | Doctoral degree |
|---|---|
| Purpose | A Doctoral degree qualifies an individual to work as an independent scholar by demonstrating the individual's capability to apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice. |
| | Research is the defining characteristic of all Doctoral degree qualifications or doctorates. While the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is generic title for a research qualification at Level 10, there are also Doctoral degrees (typically titled Doctor of [field of study]) that make a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the context of professional or creative practice. |
| | The body of work that leads to the award of a doctorate in Tonga can be one or more of the following: |
| | • a thesis<br>• a thesis focused on professional practice<br>• a creative work in the visual or performing arts with a thesis<br>• a thesis or equivalent creative work in combination with coursework<br>• creative work in the visual or performing arts<br>• published work. (doctorate by publication). |
| Outcomes | A graduate of a Level 10 Doctoral degree has made an original contribution to knowledge or creative work. |
| | Research is the defining characteristic of all Doctoral degree qualifications or doctorates. While the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is generic title for a research qualification at Level 10, there are also Doctoral degrees (typically titled Doctor of [field of study]) that make a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the context of professional or creative practice. |
| | The body of work that leads to the award of a doctorate in Tonga can be one or more of the following: |
| | • a thesis<br>• a thesis focused on professional practice<br>• a creative work in the creative (visual or performing) arts with a thesis<br>• a thesis or equivalent creative work in combination with coursework<br>• creative work in the visual or performing arts<br>• published work. (doctorate by publication). |
| | If the doctoral programme includes coursework, at least 70% of the total credit value must be achieved through research or original creative work. |
| Entry | A Bachelors with Honours degree, or a Masters degree (research), or equivalent demonstration of an ability to undertake research at an advanced level, such as a Masters degree (coursework) with research |

| | publications, or equivalent demonstration of advanced capabilities in the creative arts. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credit values | Minimum 240 at Level 10 Indicative maximum 480 Examples: | | |

| LEVEL 10 | Doctorate 1 | Doctorate 2 | Doctorate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Credits at Level 9 (coursework) | 0 | 40 | 80 |
| Credits at Level 10 | 360 | 360 | 240 |
| *Total credits* | *360* | *400* | *360* |

| Additional information | Higher Doctorates (known as a DSc or the DLitt) are awarded for independent work of special excellence, as judged by leading international experts, which is completed before a person makes an application to enrol for the degree. Individuals will normally be expected to have completed at least ten years of independent work and to have published extensively. Publication will normally be in scholarly books and/or in reputable international journals. Individuals in the visual or performing arts will have made equally outstanding contributions in their creative work. The TQF does not apply to Honorary Doctorates, which are not TQF qualifications. Honorary doctorates are awarded by an issuing organisation, typically a university, to recognise a person's extensive achievements in academic endeavour, public service, business enterprise or government. The title 'Doctor' may not be used by those who hold an honorary award. |
|---|---|

# 3. TQF POLICIES

## 3.1. Understanding a qualification

The Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board Act (2020 revised edition) defines a qualification as follows:

> 'a certificate, diploma or degree gained as a result of satisfying conditions and requirements set by an examining authority or accredited provider and showing the hours attributed to the course and the levels of competency gained'.

That is, a qualification is "a formal proof of successfully completed learning according to an agreed standard". In the context of the TQF, it can also refer to the definition of the qualification.

Qualifications are described through their titles and related information on the learning that has been completed, such as the units required to achieve expected outcomes. This information is registered (listed) on the Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF). Examples of qualification titles are 'Certificate in Tour Guiding Level 3' and, for National Qualifications, 'National Certificate in Tour Guiding Level 3'.

A component of a qualification, such as a unit, module or subject, that can also be described by reference to its title, purpose, credit points, and learning outcomes.

The qualification to be offered by a PCET provider must be developed before an entity or institution can apply for programme accreditation under the TNQAB Quality Assurance Policies. A programme of learning (also referred to as a course of study) describes in more detail the planned content and the teaching, training and assessment approaches that will be used by a provider in the delivery of each unit. Successful completion of the programme results in the award of the qualification.

The description of the programme of learning includes the definition of the qualification, as the qualification contains the title and the titles of the units.

Section 14 of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Regulations (2020 revised edition) defines various characteristics of a qualification. Before a qualification is approved by TNQAB for registration on the TQF, the following 13 characteristics must be described:

i. Title

ii. Purpose statement

iii. Rationale

iv. Qualification outcomes statement

v. Level

vi.    Credit value

vii.    Qualification components

viii.    Entry requirements

ix.    Learning assumed to be in place

x.    International comparability

xi.    Recognition of Prior Learning

xii.    Learning pathways

xiii.    Support for the qualification.

Each of these characteristics is described below in Section 3.2.

The criteria used to assess whether a qualification meets these characteristics and thus is suitable for registration are listed at **Appendix D**.

Providers must not misrepresent the purpose, title, outcomes or level of a qualification registered by the TNQAB, or falsely or fraudulently claim that a qualification has been registered by the TNQAB.

## 3.2.  Characteristics of a qualification

### 3.2.1 Qualification title

All qualifications registered on the TQF are assigned a title based on the qualification definition that they most closely reflect. See also Section 3.7 on the naming of qualifications.

The title of the qualification must be:

- Unique

- Consistent with the purpose, nature, and composition of the qualification, and

- Consistent with the recognised coverage of the TNQAB.

The title must contain a TQF level indicator. The classification in the title provides stakeholders, including those who may wish to gain the qualification, with an understanding of where the qualification fits on the TQF.

The terms 'Tonga', 'Tongan' and 'National' must <u>only</u> be used in the titles of TNQAB approved qualifications that have been developed nationally. They are 'protected terms'.

For qualifications that have been developed by a particular provider, the title includes the name of the provider or organisation that developed and owns the qualification.

The title of the qualification must include an indication of the field of education (see **Appendix C**) or sub-field e.g. 'horticulture', 'aged care'. An additional qualifier could be a sub-field, a domain of learning, or an international qualification name (such as "Master Class V" in the maritime sub-field). **Table 2** provides examples.

**Table 2 Examples of the elements of a Qualification Title**

| Developer | Qualification Type | Field or Sub-Field | Qualifier | TQF Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| National | Certificate | Building | (Carpentry) | Level 2 |
| Institute XYZ | Certificate | Computing | (Intermediate) | Level 3 |
| National | Diploma | Business | (Administration) | Diploma |
| Polytechnic B | Advanced Diploma | Engineering | (Mechanical) | Advanced Diploma |
| University C | Bachelors | Arts | (Tourism Management) | Bachelors |

### 3.2.2 Qualification purpose statement

A strategic purpose statement identifies why the qualification should be listed on the TQF. It clearly states the qualification's use and relevance to learners, industry and the community. The statement should also acknowledge the cultural and social aspirations of Tongans and other affiliated parties, where these are reflected in the need for the qualification, and support national priorities.

### 3.2.3 Qualification rationale

The rationale shows how the qualification meets specific needs in the sector for which it was developed. It identifies typical learners and shows how the qualification will provide benefits to society and to the economy.

### 3.2.4 Qualification outcomes statement

Each qualification registered on the TQF has an outcomes statement that describes the knowledge, skills and attributes of a graduate. The outcomes statement is used by prospective employers and other tertiary education organisations, and for comparing qualifications. Different learners will achieve the outcomes in different ways, so outcome statements indicate the minimum achievement expected from a qualification.

Each outcomes statement includes:

- **Graduate profiles** that identify the expected graduate outcomes of a qualification. This comprehensively describes what a person awarded the qualification must be able to collectively do, be and know. In developing graduate profiles, the qualification developer should consider the full range of capabilities and competencies.

- **Employment pathways** that identify the areas in which a graduate may be qualified to work, or the contribution they may make to their community.

### 3.2.5 Qualification level

All qualifications registered on the TQF are assigned to a level by evaluating the qualification's graduate profile against the level descriptors. The graduate profile is viewed holistically and the notion of best fit is applied in determining the level. Each assigned level should also be consistent with the corresponding generic qualification.

TQF level descriptors are broad, generic qualitative statements that indicate specific learning outcomes at a given level of the TQF, and apply to all learning contexts. They are intended to be guidelines for qualification developers and programme accreditors, and are therefore not prescriptive. The assignment of levels to qualifications and their components based on the characteristics of their learning outcomes is important for equivalency purposes and referencing of qualification frameworks.

### 3.2.6 Credit value

Each qualification registered on the TQF is assigned a credit value for both the whole qualification and its component parts. See Section 2.4.2.

In assigning credit values, a qualification developer estimates how long it would take an average learner to achieve the stated outcomes and/or competencies in the learning context, and at the level specified and to demonstrate that achievement through assessment. Credit values are expressed in whole numbers.

### 3.2.7 Qualification components

The components of qualifications should be described in terms of learning outcomes, so each qualification component can be assigned a TQF level based on the level of its learning outcomes. Components are the courses, units, units of competency, or modules or National Standards that make up the programme ('course of study') that leads to the award of the qualification.

The following should be specified in the qualification component descriptor:

i.     Title

ii.    Purpose

iii.   Credit value

iv.    TQF level

v.     Learning outcomes and/or defined competencies

vi.    Pre-requisites and co-requisites, where appropriate

vii.   Assessment methodology

viii.  Moderation arrangements

ix.    Requirements for successful completion.

For some qualifications, all components are compulsory. Others consist of compulsory components that represent essential skills and knowledge, and elective components for complementary or specialist skills.

Electives allow and encourage depth and breadth, the development of specialisation, and the recognition of different knowledge and skills in the qualification.

Electives may be required from a specified list of components, from a specified subject area, from any subject area, or from a combination of these, depending on the structure of the qualification.

### 3.2.8 Entry requirements

Any necessary entry requirements or pre-requisite qualifications should be specified. Entry requirements must specify any requirements in respect of language or physical capability but as far as possible should facilitate entry. They must be reasonable for the level and complexity of the qualification. They must not exclude individuals because of descent, gender, social origin, place of birth, family status, or simply because of special needs.

Whenever possible, open entry (where there are no pre-requisites) and recognition of prior learning is encouraged, in order to provide access to learning opportunities.

### 3.2.9  Learning assumed to be in place

There is a statement of the knowledge, skills and understanding that it is assumed the entrants into the qualification will already have, to ensure that a learner admitted to the programme of study will be reasonable able to complete it.

### 3.2.10 International comparability of the qualification

International comparability of qualifications is important in order to ensure that Tongan qualifications are at least on a par with those that are offered internationally.

A clear indication should be given of how and to what degree the qualification compares with equivalent qualifications offered internationally. International comparability of the qualification should not be restricted only to those countries that have qualifications frameworks, although they are good sources to begin with.

It is important to compare the qualification and its components with:

•    Qualifications offered in countries that are leaders in the field or sub-field

•    Qualifications offered in developing countries

•    Best practice in the field internationally.

The comparison should not be restricted only to other nationally registered qualifications but should include, where appropriate:

•    In-house training offered by leading organisations/companies

•    Short courses

•    International accords/agreements covering training in the field or sub-field.

An indication should be given of why particular countries and qualifications used were chosen for the comparison.

A statement such as, *"Tonga is at the cutting edge in this field"* is unacceptable unless it is justified with evidence from what is offered internationally. When it is stated that international best practice was used as the benchmark, an indication must be given of the nature of those best practices, where they can be found and how this qualification compares with those practices.

### 3.2.11 Recognition of Prior Learning statement

There should be a clear statement concerning how the qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), however such learning was achieved. See also Section 3.6.

### 3.2.12 Learning pathways

An indication should be given of the learning pathway of which the qualification is a part. The relationship with other qualifications should be clear, including how the qualification articulates with others, both vertically and horizontally, into which graduates of this qualification can enrol. This should also include any specific arrangements that have been made for articulation with particular qualifications. See also Section 3.6.

### 3.2.13 Support for the qualification

Each qualification should have sufficient support from a relevant national (and, where appropriate, international) industry, professional, academic, community or other interested groups.

## 3.3. Categories of PCET qualification

### 3.3.1 Qualifications that can be developed for registration on the TQF

Three broad categories of qualifications can be developed for registration on the TQF, as follows:

- National Qualifications, which have been developed in accordance with TNQAB's Guidelines for Qualification Development and TQF Registration to meet specific national priorities, industry or community needs

- Provider Qualifications, which have been developed by a registered education and training provider and approved by TNQAB as part of programme accreditation, and

- Overseas qualifications, which under the TNQA Regulations, are those that have been accredited by TNQAB or by an overseas quality assurance agency recognised by the TNQAB .

### 3.3.2 National Qualifications

National Qualifications (NQs) are quality-assured qualifications that have been developed in accordance with TNQAB's Guidelines for National Qualification Development and TQF Registration 2018 to meet specific national priorities, industry or community needs. They are made up of units of competency called National Standards.

NQs are able to be offered by any registered PCET provider that has the associated programme accredited by TNQAB and where there is a national need, that is, an expectation that a significant number of graduates of the qualification will be needed to meet labour market requirements. Their purpose is to give confidence to employers and industry that all graduates have a consistent level of skills and knowledge, although they may have achieved the qualification through different providers.

NQs are competency and outcomes based and include the terms 'National', 'Tonga' or 'Tongan' in their titles. National Qualification developments, validations and reviews are overseen by an Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC) or Sector Working Committee, which will endorse each national qualification prior to its submission to TNQAB for approval and registration on the TQF.

The terms 'Tonga', 'Tongan' and 'National' in relation to qualifications can only be used in the titles of NQs.

An NQ has identical learning outcomes, whichever provider offers the qualification. Providers may include additional units in their programmes but the core units to achieve the National Qualification are the same.

In addition to the characteristics of a qualification, National Qualifications state accreditation requirements that must be met for a provider to deliver the programme of study, such as resources and qualified trainers or teachers.

The process to develop a National Qualification includes the preparation of a proposal report which is then sent to TNQAB for consultation. Developers of NQs are expected to demonstrate awareness of relevant copyright laws and refrain from unauthorised use of copyrighted materials, including overseas qualifications. They are required to check carefully the copyright status of a proposed qualification before entering into any form of licensing arrangement. Developers of NQs may be required to provide proof of copyright clearance.

Full details are included in the Guidelines for National Qualification Development and TQF Registration 2018.

Every 5 years, developers of National Qualifications are required to initiate a thorough external review of the qualification, to update the qualification and ensure it remains current. The developer is expected to initiate the process and manage it, with support from TNQAB.

See **Appendix F** for a list of Guidelines and documents that are used for National Qualifications.

### 3.3.3 National external moderation for National Qualifications

Moderation refers to processes to compare assessment tasks or the judgements made by assessors of whether learners have achieved the required standard for each unit of competency.

The purpose of moderation is to provide assurance that assessment is fair, valid and at an appropriate standard, and that assessors are making consistent judgements about learner performance. Usually, the comparison is made by those with expertise in the relevant area collectively reviewing documents and discussing whether they agree.

Internal moderation of assessment is the responsibility of each registered provider. This is necessary to ensure consistency of assessment within an accredited provider over time and between assessors.

When more than one provider is accredited to offer a National Qualification, TNQAB will establish a National External Moderation (NEM) process. The purpose is to ensure that that providers of each accredited National Qualification are conducting assessments that are nationally consistent and at an appropriate standard. The NEM process is especially important in the early years of National Qualifications. The process will check samples of assessed work to ensure that all accredited providers and workplace

assessors make consistent and reliable judgments. As far as possible, a process of collective review will be used, to share knowledge and increase consistency.

### 3.3.4 Provider Qualifications

A Provider Qualification is intended to be offered by a PCET provider through a programme of learning. A Provider Qualification is developed by a registered provider, or an entity that is applying to become a registered provider, or by a person or organisation that develops and sells or licenses the content of the qualification to a provider that will deliver it.

Unlike a National Qualification, a Provider Qualification is not able to be delivered by other providers except through a licensing arrangement (such as a contract or Memorandum of Agreement) with the provider or organisation that developed the qualification. Providers are required to check carefully the copyright and provenance of the proposed qualification before entering into any licensing arrangement, to ensure they will legally be able to offer the qualification. In most cases the Provider Qualification will be offered only by the registered provider that has developed the qualification.

A qualification must be developed before an institution can apply for programme accreditation. A Provider Qualification cannot duplicate a National Qualification.

Provider Qualifications are approved through the process of programme accreditation, explained in the TNQAB Quality Assurance Policies 2023 and related Guidelines. Requirements for assessment and moderation of Provider Qualifications are stated in this document as well.

To commence the process of programme accreditation of a Provider Qualification, a registered provider must give TNQAB a Notice of Intention to develop a Provider Qualification.

Provider Qualifications are registered on the TQF by TNQAB when the programme of study leading to the qualification has been accredited by TNQAB and the qualification has been assessed as meeting the characteristics of a qualification (see **Appendix D**).

### 3.3.5 Overseas qualifications offered in Tonga

Under Section 13 (b) of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Regulations, PCET qualifications that have been accredited by an overseas quality assurance agency recognised by the Board can be registered on the TQF. The normal situation in which this would occur is when an overseas-based provider establishes a presence in Tonga and becomes a registered PCET provider or when an overseas-based provider enters into a twinning or franchise agreement with a Tonga-based institution for delivery of the overseas provider's qualifications in Tonga.

A process of recognition may be used by TNQAB to streamline the accreditation of overseas qualifications offered in Tonga but there are likely to be additional checks to ensure the programme delivery arrangements are appropriate.

Providers of the overseas qualification must be registered as PCET providers in Tonga.

### 3.3.6 Assessment of qualifications earned overseas

On request, TNQAB provides expert advice on the comparability of a qualification earned overseas with the qualification level and type of TQF qualifications. This advice supports PCET providers, industry, Government and individuals in understanding the level and nature of the overseas qualification, for the purposes of further education or employment. TNQAB may include a statement on the authenticity of the documentation.

Overseas professional certifications are not readily able to be compared to a TQF formal educational qualification. However, TNQAB may note the international recognition of a professional certification and may provide a comment on any established international reference points where further information on comparability of such certifications can be found can be found, such as a European National Information Centre (ENIC).

## 3.4.  Credentials and certifications

### 3.4.1. Registration of credentials on the TQF

There is great interest in Tonga in registering on the TQF some learning activities that providers offer but which have smaller volumes of learning than the 40 credits minimum for a TQF qualification. Internationally, these credentials are often referred to as 'short forms of learning' or 'micro-credentials'. In Australia, the term 'skills sets' is used for units of competency drawn from Australian national qualifications from Level 1 to Level 6.

While professional and industry certifications are common (see Section 3.4.2), as are short courses for professional development or training, the regulated education sectors in most countries, and their national qualifications frameworks, have focused until recently on providing on 'formal' educational qualifications.

Section 10 of the TNQAB Act (2020 revised edition) already allows for the accreditation of 'short courses'. The term' short course' is defined as meaning:

> 'a course which is less than 12 months —
>
> a) that may contain a component or components of an accredited course of study; and
>
> b) for which a participant on successful completion shall receive an award or credit specifying the level of competency attained'.

This definition in similar to recent definitions of a micro-credential, for example:

> 'A micro-credential:
>
> - is a record of focused learning achievement, verifying what the learner knows, understands, or can do;

- includes assessment based on clearly defined standards and awarded by a trusted provider;

- has stand-alone value and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through recognition of prior learning;

- meets the standards required by relevant quality assurance'

(*2022 UNESCO Report 'Towards a Common Definition of Micro-Credentials'*)

Internationally, many educational institutions are now offering micro-credentials alongside their formal qualifications. These micro-credentials are usually pegged to a qualification framework level and, as an assessed short course, may be 'stacked' to give credit towards a formal qualification.

The TQF has previously registered only qualifications but not short courses. While individual National Standards are recorded as part of a National Qualification, they do not stand alone on the TQF. Individual units (modules, courses, papers) of Provider Qualifications cannot be registered on the TQF.

New Zealand has been an early adopter in allowing the registration of micro-credentials on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework, although it registers these credentials separately as credentials and not as qualifications. For Tonga, a similar approach is used in this Third Edition of the TQF.

Tonga's legislation referring to the TQF does not refer to the registration of short courses on the TQF and imposes restrictions on the titles of qualifications that can be registered (certificate, diplomas and degrees).

However, given that TNQAB has authority to accredit short courses, TQF could potentially include a separate system for the registration of accredited short courses that meet specific criteria.

Accordingly, the TQF has been expanded to include a separate listing for 'PCET Credentials'. At this early stage of regulation of these shorter forms of learning, only National Standards or groups of National Standards from National Qualifications can be registered, with some other restrictions noted below.

The credentials for short courses to be registered on the TQF can be termed 'Skill Set' (SS) or 'Micro-Credential' (MC). The name of the credential needs to ensure that it is clearly distinguished from a formal qualification, so must be of the form:

- Skill Set in XXX (e.g., Sustainable Energy) Level 2

- Micro-Credential in XXX (e.g., Tour Guiding) Level 3.

The requirements for registration on the TQF of a SS or MC are that each:

- Must comprise one or more National Standards drawn from National Qualifications, with a volume of learning between 1 and 39 credits

- Must provide evidence of a genuine industry or government need to offer learners the specific unit or combination of units in the SS or MC, rather than just any combination

- Must have stated learning outcomes for the SS or MC and a stated TQF level for the MC or SS, related to the National Standards that are included

- Must demonstrate valid and reliable assessment of the learning outcomes

- Must be accredited by TNQAB for a stated period of time, even if the PCET provider has self-accrediting authority for qualifications, and will be subject to ongoing monitoring of its assessment tasks and outcomes

- Can only be offered by a PCET provider that is already offering a National Qualification in at least one of the same fields of study as the units in the MC or SS

- Can only be offered by a PCET provider that does not have any conditions or limitations on its registration and on the accreditation of any of its programmes.

TNQAB will develop further policy and guidelines on the accreditation of MCs and SSs, aiming to streamline these accreditation requirements as much as possible consistent with meeting TNQAB Quality Standards.

### 3.4.2 Professional and industry certifications

Many professional associations offer and award their own certifications, which may be widely recognised internationally, e.g. Chartered Practising Accountant (CPA). In the medical profession, Colleges or other bodies issue professional Fellowships or Board certifications. Some of these professional bodies may have particular standing through the issuing of various forms of licence from government or a ruler or head of state, for example, a Royal Charter. There is an extensive range of such certifications by professional associations.

In government, certain authorities will issue their own certifications after providing relevant training, usually at international standard. Examples are police and emergency services and agencies that have jurisdiction over matters that by their nature are international, for example, maritime and air transport. There are often international governing bodies for these activities, such as the World Meteorological Organization.

Although they are not registered on the TQF, these certifications are internationally recognised and may have been mapped to a level on one or more national qualifications frameworks of other countries. TNQAB may be able to provide further advice.

Similarly, many industry bodies and major corporations also issue their own certifications, e.g. CISCO, Google. Again, these certifications are often globally

recognised as important certifications for employment. They are not registered on the TQF.

On a related point, various professional associations or government agencies accredit formal PCET programmes of study or require graduates to meet professional standards in order to be registered to practice, such as teachers and nurses, and regulated skilled trades, such as electricians and plumbers. TNQAB will work with these associations and agencies as required, to minimise duplication of processes for programme accreditation and professional registration.

## 3.5. Indigenous Knowledge and Skills

Around the globe, national qualifications frameworks mostly reflect a view of knowledge and learning that privileges formal qualifications earned through established universities and regulated entities. TNQAB is aware that more must be done in Tonga to state inclusively the different knowledge systems and practices that are recognised as 'learning'.

In the Pacific, there is now widespread acknowledgement of the need to respect "Indigenous knowledge systems as equally legitimate and complementary to Western scientific frameworks" (Wiki-Bennett, 2024). There is increasing use of these knowledge systems in unit content, teaching approaches and research methodologies (Johansson-Fua, 2023).

TNQAB undertakes to work with other stakeholders to develop approaches to the wider recognition of Tongan Indigenous Knowledge and Skills that reflect Tongan worldviews, knowledge systems, and practices.

While Indigenous Knowledge and Skills can be taught and recognised within the TQF's regulated educational qualifications, these knowledges and skills should be recognised also through methods that are themselves consistent with Tongan worldviews, language and culture.

### 3.6. Learning pathways and Recognition of Prior Learning

#### 3.6.1 Learning pathways

The TQF is an important tool to provide people with flexible learning pathways (FLPs) through and between further study and work.

*The United Nations Education 2030 Agenda encourages all countries to develop well-articulated education systems that offer FLPs for their learners. Providing multiple entry points to and progression routes between institutions, courses, or*

*educational levels brings many benefits for individuals and society, particularly in terms of equity, employability, or efficiency in the management of resources.*

(*UNESCO IIEP Flexible learning pathways in higher education, no date*)

The TNQAB strongly supports the development of seamless pathways through school and PCET qualifications for key economic sectors in Tonga.

Two ways that PCET providers can support learning pathways are:

1.  Ensuring that entry requirements for their qualifications provide multiple pathways from other qualifications, wherever achieved.

Entry requirements for learners, which are set by PCET providers, vary for specific qualifications at the same level, due to differences in the fields of study. The purpose of entry requirements is to ensure that each learner starts a programme of study with enough current knowledge and skills to be able to successfully complete the programme.

2.  Supporting open entry and granting the maximum possible recognition of prior learning (RPL) to learners, so they do not have to repeat learning they have already achieved.

Any registered PCET provider can offer a PCET qualification at any level of the TQF but only if TQF regulatory requirements are met and if this is consistent with the provider's mission.

Registered PCET providers must provide transparent advice on pathway entry requirements to prospective learners, such as pathways from competency-based education at Level 4 to graded assessment at Level 5 and above, including Bachelors, Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma qualifications at Level 7. Providers are able to require the completion of bridging requirements or hurdle tests to ensure that learners will have the required knowledge and skills to be able to successfully complete the qualification.

PCET providers must also state the pathways from the programme and qualification, that is expected employment and further education outcomes.

### 3.6.2   Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of prior learning is a broad term to describe various ways in which a person's relevant and current skills and knowledge are formally assessed to determine if they meet the learning outcomes of a qualification and/or standard(s).

The process of RPL does not have regard to where the prior learning took place or whether it is obtained through formal, non-formal or informal learning. The learning could have been gained through the workplace, life experiences, hobbies, overseas training, short courses, or other means.

For learners intending to enrol in a TQF qualification, RPL could lead to:

a)     Entry into a programme of study

b)     Granting of credit for studies leading to a TQF qualification

c)     Award of a TQF qualification.

Under the TNQAB Act (2020revised edition), recognition of prior learning means:

> 'credit given for existing skills and knowledge assessed by an accredited expert in the field'.

The Act prescribes the use of an RPL assessment by a recognised assessor for the purposes of proving that a PCET teacher has the required qualifications to teach but does not otherwise make rules for RPL.

Under the TNQAB Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, registered PCET providers must establish a system for RPL, to be available when requested by learners.

The RPL assessment must be undertaken by an RPL assessor recognised by the Board of TNQAB through an application process. TNQAB will provide support and advice.

The maximum amount of prior learning that can be recognised in respect of a TQF qualification is 100%, which would mean that the TQF qualification would have been achieved by the learner and can be awarded by the PCET provider that has conducted the assessment.

TNQAB will monitor the implementation of RPL through annual provider monitoring and programme accreditation processes.

### 3.6.3   Credit transfer

Credit transfer or advanced standing is a specific form of RPL, where a learner's prior formal learning or qualifications are recognised, so the learner is exempted from having to undertake certain subjects or units of competency when enrolling in a new qualification.

In this context, the term 'credit' means a learner has already 'banked' their prior learning so can reduce the time taken to achieve a related qualification. Sometimes there are agreements between institutions that provide for automatic credit to be given when a learner transfers to another institution.

To ensure that credit given for previous studies is not excessive, there need to be some limits on the maximum amounts of credit that may be recognised for the award of a TQF qualification by an institution.

For National Qualifications, 100% automatic mutual recognition of completed units of competency or units must be applied when learners apply to continue an unfinished qualification at the same level or a higher level qualification in the same field.

For other qualifications at Levels 1 to 6, the maximum amount of credit that may be given for completed units of competency or studies towards a new qualification at a higher TQF level is 100%. However, if the new qualification is the same or at the same level, a maximum of 70% applies.

For a Level 7 Bachelors qualification, the maximum amount of credit that may be given for a prior TQF or comparable qualification (or similar overseas qualification) is:

- 240 credits of a 360 credit Bachelors degree programme for credit transfer from a Level 6 Advanced Diploma or Level 5 and 6 incomplete Bachelors qualification in the same or a related field of study

- 120 credits of a 360 credit Bachelors degree programme for credit transfer from a Level 5 Diploma or Level 5 incomplete Bachelors degree in the same or a related field of study.

Lower maximum amounts should be applied to a prior qualification in an unrelated field of study.

The maximum amount of credit that may be transferred, outside of nested articulation arrangements, to a postgraduate coursework programme for prior postgraduate qualifications or partially completed qualifications is:

- 50% of the total credit point value of the programme for credit transfer in a related field of study.

The maximum amount of credit that may be transferred in nested articulation arrangements for postgraduate programmes approved by the certifying institution is 100% of the total credit point value. For example, 100% of a nested Postgraduate Diploma would be recognised for credit if the learner continues to study towards the next level up, namely, the Masters degree qualification, and all the units in the Postgraduate Diploma are required for the Masters degree.

Further detail is available in the TNQAB Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, which includes advice on credit transfer.


## 3.7. Guidance for naming of PCET qualifications

### 3.7.1 Naming conventions

The TQF provides generic titles for qualifications such as Certificate, Diploma, Bachelors degree and Masters degree. Qualifications issued by PCET providers include these titles plus the names of the specific qualification. The generic part of the name is the TQF name, e.g., Certificate Level 3, Bachelors. The specific part provides the area of learning, although even a specific title can be very broad, such as a Bachelor of Science.

Examples are:

- National Certificate in Tour Guiding Level 3
- Certificate in Sports Science Level 4
- Diploma in Education (Primary)
- Advanced Diploma in Information Technology
- Bachelor of Agriculture
- Bachelor of Science
- Bachelor of Science (with Honours)
- Bachelor of Science (Chemistry)
- Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Law (a double degree)
- Graduate Certificate in Acute Care Nursing
- Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Science
- Master of Business Administration
- Doctor of Philosophy.

Some programmes of study include major or minor sequences that will be listed on the record of results. The name of the major or minor may or may not appear on the testamur certificate awarded to the graduate, known as a testamur or statement of achievement.

It is common for some qualifications to use abbreviations as well as the full qualification name. Abbreviations for qualifications should follow international conventions for degrees taught in English, noting that there are differences in the titles and definitions of some qualifications across countries.

### 3.7.2   Post-nominals

Graduates who have obtained a TQF qualification are entitled to use the approved abbreviation for the qualification as a post-nominal (after their name) if this is an accepted convention. Post-nominal abbreviations are not commonly used for Certificate 1 to 4 qualifications.

An example of a post nominal is 'A. Graduate (personal name), BA', to signify Bachelor of Arts. The following are examples of typical abbreviations for qualifications:

- Diploma in Commerce: *DipCom*
- Advanced Diploma in Computer Science: *AdvDipCompSci*
- Bachelor of Arts: *BA*
- Bachelor of Arts with Honours: *BA(Hons)*
- Bachelor of Science: *BSc*
- Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery: *MBBS*
- Bachelor of Business Administration: *BBA*
- Bachelor of Engineering: *BEng*

- Graduate Certificate in Agribusiness: *GCertAgrbus*
- Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Development: *PGDip SustDev*
- Master of Arts: *MA*
- Master of Science: *MSc*
- Master of Business Administration: *MBA*
- Doctor of Philosophy: *PhD.*

The name of the institution, or an abbreviation, may also be included after the qualification, e.g., *DipCom USP* (for University of the South Pacific).

For a doctoral qualification, the most common abbreviation is 'PhD' which stands for Doctor of Philosophy. However, there are also doctoral qualifications that have more specific names: examples are Doctor of Education (EdD), Doctor of Fina Arts (DFA) and Doctor of Business Administration (DBA).

Persons with 'earned' (not Honorary) doctorates may use the title 'Dr' instead of a post-nominal.

This use of the title 'Doctor' by a doctoral graduate is different to the professional title 'Doctor' that is used as a non-TQF title in several health-related fields, such as medicine and dentistry, although the holder may have completed only a Bachelors or Masters level qualification.

## 3.8. Authorities in respect of qualifications and credentials

The Ministry of Education and Training (MET), TNQAB, other Government entities, PCET providers, industry bodies, professional organisations and other stakeholders undertake a variety of roles in ensuring that Tonga's regulated educational qualifications are of good quality and fit for purpose.

TNQAB has overall responsibility for the TQF and for the quality of PCET qualifications, while MET has responsibility for all school qualifications.

**Table 3** below shows the different authorities of different types of school and PCET stakeholders. More detailed information on the precise scope of the authority and other parties that are involved, such as industry advisory groups, is available from TNQAB.

**Table 3 Authorities for qualifications and credentials on the TQF**

| Authority<br>Role | MET<br>(schools) | TNQAB | PCET providers in Tonga | Overseas entities |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintaining the TQF | No | Yes | No | No |
| Registering PCET providers | No | Yes | No | No |
| Developing and reviewing PCET qualifications | No | Yes, for National Qualifications | Yes | Yes, for overseas qualifications |
| Developing programmes of study (curricula, staffing) | Yes, for schools | Partially, for National Qualifications | Yes, for PCET programmes | Yes, overseas providers |
| Quality assuring qualifications externally | Yes, for schools | Yes | No | Yes, overseas external quality agencies |
| Offering programmes and qualifications | No (schools do this) | No | Yes | Yes, overseas providers |
| Awarding qualifications | Yes, for schools | Controls awarding of National Qualifications | Yes | Yes, for overseas providers |

## 3.9. Guidance for issuing certificates and records of results

PCET providers issue documentation to individuals to confirm their PCET qualification and performance. These certificates and records serve as tangible evidence of an individual's educational attainment. They are often issued in hard copy but electronic records must also be maintained. Sufficient information must be provided on a testamur and record of results to ensure that the documentation is able to be authenticated and to reduce fraudulent use.

All graduates who have completed a programme of learning that leads to the award of a TQF qualification must receive a testamur or certificate of achievement. So must people who have completed a credential recognised on the TQF.

A testamur is a formal certificate confirming that a person has successfully completed a programme of study leading to the award of the qualification or credential, signed by the certifying institution. Each certificate must contain sufficient information to identify the graduate correctly.

### 3.9.1   Testamurs or certificates

Typically, a testamur for a Provider Qualification includes the following information:

- Name of the educational institution: The name of the institution issuing the testamur or certificate is mentioned prominently

- Recipient's name: The full name of the individual who has successfully completed the programme is included, that is, the person who will graduate with the award of the TQF qualification or credential

- Title of the qualification or credential: The name of the qualification or credential completed by the recipient is stated, sometimes with any relevant specialisation or major for the programme of study

- Date of conferral of the award: The date the certificate was given.

- Signatures: The testamur or certificate is usually signed by representatives of the registered PCET provider who are authorised to sign, such as the chair of the governing body, the president, director, principal and/or registrar

- Official seal: If required by the provider's own rules, an official seal or emblem of the registered PCET provider must be included

- Additional logos if required: The logo of a government agency may be required to be included on testamurs

- Additional unique identifiers: Registered PCET providers may include other documents to reduce credential fraud, such as watermarks or holograms.

The certificate for a National Qualification includes the Tonga Coat of Arms and some different information.

The testamur or certificate of achievement serves as a formal acknowledgment of an individual's achievement and can be used as evidence of qualification or credential when applying for employment, further education, or professional licensing. It is an important document that holds value and recognition within the community. Often, a graduate will have their testamur framed and display it.

### 3.9.2   Record of results or academic transcript

A record of results or 'academic transcript' refers to a document that provides a comprehensive summary of a learner's performance, grades, or scores in a particular set of assessments while an enrolled learner at a particular institution. It typically includes detailed information about each National Standard, unit, subject, course, or module undertaken, along with the corresponding outcomes achieved by the learner.

Learners who complete any part of the requirements of a TQF qualification in which they are enrolled, or of a recognised TQF credential, are entitled to receive a full record of results.

A record of results should contain the following information:

- Individual's identification: The record will include the learner's full name, learner or student identification number, and any other relevant identifying details.

- Programme of study details: The record will outline the specific units of competency, units, subjects, or modules taken by the learner, including the corresponding codes or names. The transcript may indicate if a qualification at Levels 8 or 9 has been achieved through research or by coursework.

- Grades or scores: The record will indicate the grades, marks, or scores obtained by the learner for each unit. This could be in the form of a statement of competency, letter grades, numerical scores, or other grading systems specific to the registered PCET provider.

- Credits and credit values: The record shou include information about the credits and credit values associated with each unit and the qualification or credential as a whole.

- Cumulative information: The record may provide a cumulative summary of the learner's overall performance, especially where graded assessment is used, Examples are the grade point average (GPA) or weighted average, which reflects the learner's performance across multiple units or modules. If grade point averages (GPAs) are provided, the transcript must also include a statement explaining the GPA scale used by the institutions.

- Dates and learning periods: The record may include information about the dates of enrolment, semesters or other information on the timing of studies.

- Institutional information: The record should include the name of the registered PCET provider, the department or faculty responsible for the programme leading to the qualification, and any other relevant institutional details.

- Signatures or official stamp: The record of results must be signed or certified by representatives of the registered PCET provider who are authorised to sign on behalf of the provider, such as the registrar. Other evidence of the authenticity of the document can be provided.

There may be differences between National Qualifications and Provider Qualifications in the record of results.

A record of results serves as an official document that reflects an individual's academic achievements and performance, with more detail than a testamur. It is used for various purposes, such as applying for further education, seeking employment, or

demonstrating eligibility for scholarships, awards, or honours. Educational institutions, employers, and other relevant parties may request a record of results to assess an individual's qualifications, skills, and competencies.

Graduates are entitled to retain testamurs and records of results once they have been issued, unless:

- the TQF qualification builds on a lower-level qualification in the same discipline at the same certifying institution and the institution has a policy regarding the surrender of certification documentation; or

- the qualification is revoked under the terms of the certifying institution's policy.

If any part of the qualification has been delivered and/or assessed in a language other than English, a statement that this has occurred should be included on the testamur and the record of results.

Accrediting authorities may require certifying organisations to include additional information on the certification documentation.

The registered PCET provider must have a policy that permits the replacement of certification documentation and be responsible for authentication of any replacement certification documentation. Registered PCET providers must maintain a register of all TQF qualifications they are authorised to issue, and maintain a register of all TQF qualifications they issue to graduates.

## 3.10. Changes of status for a registered qualification

### 3.10.1 Status of a registered qualification or credential

Each qualification registered on the TQF, and each credential, must display and maintain clear information on its status using the following definitions:

- Current: Qualifications that are current are those which are listed on the TQF and can be offered by registered PCET providers. The same applies to credentials that are registered on the TQF.

- Expiring: Qualifications that are expiring are those which are 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 enrolled learners while they complete their programme, but no new learners would be able to enrol. Current learners will need to complete the qualification before the expiry date or transfer their enrolment. A similar provision applies to credentials registered on the TQF.

- Discounted: Qualifications designated as discontinued will no longer be available or awarded. However, it is important to record that they once were offered. A similar provision applies to credentials registered on the TQF.

### 3.10.2 Changing the status of a registered qualification

If a developer (for National Qualifications) or a provider (for Provider Qualifications) wishes to change the purpose, title, outcome statement, level or credit value of a qualification registered on the TQF, approval must be sought from TNQAB as soon as practicable.

The provider must complete the appropriate form and submit it to TNQAB at least three (3) months before the change is expected to be implemented. The changes should not be implemented until they have been approved by TNQAB.

Providers will be notified of any changes to any qualification components approved by TNQAB and informed of what actions they need to take and any transition period to new or revised qualifications.

Where a new or revised qualification is to replace an existing quality assured qualification no current learner should be disadvantaged. Transition arrangements should be documented that provide:

a)    Specified time limits for the completion of existing qualifications

b)    Credit transfer or exemptions for specified components

c)    Treatment of qualifications under development

d)    An appeals mechanism

e)    Details of how the arrangements will be managed.

TNQAB may seek additional information from providers to ensure that these transition arrangements are being met.

### 3.10.3 Review, renewal or discontinuation of a registered qualification

All qualifications registered on the TQF are subject to periodic reviews to ensure that they maintain relevance and that their outcomes are still appropriate and consistent with other similar qualifications.

A review provides an opportunity for the qualification developer and relevant stakeholders to reassess the need for the qualification, to determine whether it is still fit-for-purpose.

The review of each National Qualification must be completed within a period of no longer than five years after listing on the TQF or the previous review, but TNQAB may instigate earlier review if warranted (see TNQAB Quality Assurance Policies 2023). Factors to be

considered in determining the review period include the rate of change in the industry and the size of the qualification.

Provider Qualifications will be reviewed by TNQAB as part of the programme accreditation process and/or the quality audit process, and so the period of registration of the Provider Qualification is determined by the programme accreditation period.

Where TNQAB considers that there may be grounds for deregistering a provider's Qualification from the TQF, it will give written notice to the governing body of the provider:

a)      setting out the grounds for its decision/action.

b)      stating a reasonable and defined period (normally two to four weeks) within which to make submissions on the matter.

TNQAB will consider any written submissions and may give a further defined period of time to address the specified issues. It will then make a decision and send a final written notice, specifying the details and the effective date of its decision.

TNQAB may take the above action as a result of a review,  special pose audit or other investigation.

### 3.10.4 Regaining a Provider Qualification's current registered status

The provider of a Provider Qualification that was deregistered from the TQF as a result of an investigation, special purpose audit or an external audit will need to seek reaccreditation of the programme and re-registration of the associated qualification.

### 3.10.5 Compliance notices

TNQAB may issue a compliance notice to a provider requiring the provider to take, or refrain from taking, a particular action in relation to registration of any of its qualifications on the TQF.

Every compliance notice will be in writing (a formal letter from TNQAB) and must:

a)      give the date on which is it issued; and

b)      specify a time on or before which, or a period within which, the Provider must comply with the notice; and

c)      state the possible consequences of non-compliance with the notice.

A provider that receives a compliance notice must comply with it within the time period specified, which will normally be between a minimum of ten and a maximum of twenty working days from the date of issue of the notice.

TNQAB may publish any compliance notice, or a summary of a compliance notice, in a manner designed to inform the public of the compliance notice.

TNQAB may extend the period of time for a provider to rectify compliance.

If the provider does not comply with the compliance notice, TNQAB may immediately impose new, or amend or revoke any existing condition(s) on registration of any of its qualifications on the TQF.

# APPENDIX A  Legal requirements for qualifications

Schedule B of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Regulations (2020 revised edition) sets out requirements for qualification titles and characteristics, as follows:

> "Each qualification shall be defined by characteristics and credit requirements based on the following –
>
> **(1)** **Certificates** may be used in a wide range of contexts across all levels, and are used to prepare candidates for both employment and further education and training. A certificate is the minimum qualification that can be placed on the Tonga Qualifications Framework.
>
> **(2)** **Diplomas** prepare learners for self-directed application of skills and knowledge. These qualifications recognise capacity for initiative and judgement across a broad range of educational and vocational areas. They recognise a capacity for initiative and judgement in technical, professional, or management roles and build on prior qualifications or experience.
>
> **(3)** **Degrees** are awarded on the basis of the satisfactory completion of a course of advanced learning that is taught by people engaged in research, and that emphasises general principles and knowledge as the basis for self-directed work and learning. Four types of degrees are available –
>
> (a)  Doctoral
>
> (b)  Masters
>
> (c)  Bachelors with Honours
>
> (d)  Bachelors
>
> **(4)** **Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas** are designed for degree graduates to broaden their knowledge and skills at an undergraduate level, either in a familiar subject or discipline or in a new area.
>
> **(5)** **Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas** extend and deepen a candidate's knowledge and skills by building on attainment in the principal subject(s) of a qualifying Bachelors degree."

# APPENDIX B    Acronyms and Glossary

## List of acronyms used in this document

| Acronym | Term |
|---------|------|
| DBA | Doctor of Business Administration |
| EdD | Doctor of Education |
| ENIC | European National Information Centre ( recognition of qualifications) |
| FLPs | flexible learning pathways |
| GPA | Grade Point Average |
| HE | Higher Education |
| ITAC | Industry Training Advisory Committee |
| MC | Micro-credential (see definition in Glossary) |
| MET | Ministry of Education and Training (Tonga) |
| NEM | National External Moderation |
| PhD | Doctor of Philosophy |
| PCET | Post Compulsory Education and Training |
| RPL | Recognition of prior learning |
| SS | Skill Set (see definition in Glossary) |
| TNQA | Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation (as in the Regulations) |
| TNQAB | Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board |
| TQF | Tonga Qualifications Framework |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Education and Training (see definition in Glossary) |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |

# Glossary of terms

Adaptability

In the context of the TQF, the ability to use information or ideas for purposes other than they were intended for (transfer of skill and knowledge)

Autonomy

In the context of the TQF, the ability to apply knowledge and skills to reach decisions across all aspects of a job or field of study.

Bachelors degree

A Bachelors degree is a systematic and coherent introduction to the knowledge, ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject or subjects. Also referred to as a Bachelor or Bachelor's degree. (The term in the TQF 2024 is taken from the TNQAB Act.)

Certificate

1.  A formal educational qualification at Levels 1 to 4 of the TQF and at Levels 7 and 8 (see Graduate Certificate or Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma). Certificates at Levels 1 to 4 are often used to prepare learners for both employment and further education and training.

2.  A generic term for the record of a qualification or completion of formal or non-formal learning. See also testamur.

See also 'Foundation Certificate'.

Course

A course is a component of a programme of study comprising an integrated education delivery or training package that includes appropriate content, teaching and learning approaches, resources, assessment activity, delivery modes and duration designed to achieve a set of learning outcomes. Also referred to as a 'unit', 'module' or 'subject'.

Credential

In an educational context, means a certification, formal or informal, of learning or experience or attendance, indicating that a person has the capability to do something or has acquired certain knowledge or skills. A formal educational qualification is one type of credential. Credential. In the context of the TQF, means recognition given to the completion of a programme of learning that does not lead to a TQF qualification but which involves an assessment of learning.

Credit

A means of measuring and recognising learning whenever and wherever it is achieved, as when credit is awarded for prior studies or qualifications. The aim is for learners not to have repeat learning they have already achieved.

In the context of the TQF, credit is a means to measure and formally acknowledge learning achieved in a formal educational context. See also 'credit transfer' and 'credit value'.

Credit transfer

A specific form of the Recognition of Prior Learning, where learning achieved in a prior qualification is granted credit towards a new qualification. This is called 'credit transfer' or 'advanced standing'.

Credit value

The numerical value assigned to a full qualification, as well as to its components, that represents the notional time needed for a typical learner to demonstrate that all the specified outcomes have been achieved. In the TQF, the credit value reflects the expected 'volume of learning', where 1 credit = 10 notional hours of learning activity. Also referred to as 'credit points'.

Diploma

A formal educational qualification at Levels 5 and 6 of the TQF, and at Levels 7 and 8 (see Graduate Certificate or Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma). Diplomas at Levels 5 and 6 recognise the acquisition of higher-level skill and knowledge and often build on prior qualifications and experience.

Doctoral degree or doctorate

A research-focused qualification that is at a significantly higher level than a Masters degree, reflecting scholarly independence. It is awarded in recognition of research that has made a substantial and original contribution to knowledge or equivalent creative work.

Entry requirement

In the context of the TQF, the criteria established by a provider that permit a learner to enrol and commence study for a formal educational qualification. Also referred to as an admission requirement.

Exit qualification

An exit qualification is a TQF qualification that can be awarded to learners who cease study before the completion of a full qualification at another TQF level, if the requirements of the exit qualification are met. To be awarded by a provider, the nested qualifications must also be accredited by TNQAB. See also 'nested qualification'.

Field of study

The sub-field or field of education in which a learner is working to understand, use skills and apply their capabilities.

Foundation Certificate

In the context of the TQF, a Foundation Certificate is a certificate at Level 4 awarded after successful completion of a university foundation year that would lead into a bachelor level qualification at Level 7.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

For assessment tasks with graded outcomes, the grades can be translated into numeric values, often from 0 to 4 or 0 to 7, where 0 would be a failure and 4 or 7 would be the highest grade. A GPA is often calculated by adding up all accumulated final grades and dividing that figure by the number of grades awarded but it can also be weighted, for example, by the credit values of all the units completed.

Graduate

As a verb, means to receive recognition after successful completion of a programme of study. As a noun, the person who has completed this achievement. In regard of qualifications, see 'Postgraduate'.

Graduate Certificate or Diploma

A Graduate Certificate or diploma is designed as a vehicle for graduates to pursue further study at an undergraduate level. The qualification can be designed to broaden knowledge and skills in a familiar subject or discipline or develop knowledge in a new area.

Indigenous Knowledge and Skills

Means an integrated and holistic worldview that encompasses a "cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment" (adapted from IPBES 2019, 2021).

In this context, means Tongan traditional knowledge, skills and worldviews.

Industry certification

A formal certification or endorsement of a person's learning that is recognised by those engaged in the particular industry. The certification may involve passing an examination against standards and may be assessed independently. The certifying body may be a corporation, for example, CISCO, Google, or an industry/professional association for example, the Project Management Institute (PMI), ASQ. See also 'professional certification'.

### Industry Training Advisory Committee

A committee of industry representatives to oversee the development of a National Qualification.

### Learning outcome

A short statement of what a learner is expected to be able to know, do, value or apply at the completion of a unit or unit of competency or of a programme of learning.

### Learning pathways

Refers to a specific sequence of learning experiences, which can include formal and informal learning, that a learner can take to enhance their knowledge, skills or capabilities in a particular field.

### Masters degree

A Masters degree is normally designed to extend the principal subject or subjects of a former qualifying Bachelors degree or may build on relevant knowledge and skills derived from occupational experience.

### Micro-credential

In the context of the TQF, means a programme of study in a specific area between 1 and 39 credit points, designed for reskilling and upskilling, which is pegged to a TQF level and is formally assessed. Successful completion leads to a credential but not to a formal TQF qualification.

More generally, the term refers to assessed and quality assured shorter forms of learning provided by an educational institution.

### Mode

In the context of the TQF, the mode of study (or mode of delivery of teaching), which can include:

- face-to-face learning in a classroom or laboratory
- eLearning (online learning)
- hybrid or blended learning (combining online learning with face-to-face)
- distance or independent learning
- work-integrated learning
- intensive delivery, for example, over a few days wholly given to teaching or learning.

### National Qualification

A qualification developed to meet a specific priority national need or interest, and whose development has involved, and has widespread endorsement by, the appropriate national industry, profession or community related to the qualification outcomes.

In this context means a National Qualification developed in Tonga, which has National Standards as its components.

## National Standard

For a Tonga National Qualification, the specification of the competencies required for effective performance in the workplace, expressed in a consistent format and nationally endorsed by the relevant stakeholders for application within a specific industry or sector. See also 'unit of competency'.

## Nested qualification

Nested qualifications are qualifications that include articulated arrangements from a lower-level qualification into a higher-level qualification, to enable multiple entry and exit points. Examples are: a Diploma or an Advanced Diploma nested within a Bachelors qualification; a Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma nested within a Masters qualification. To be awarded by a provider, the nested qualifications must also be accredited by TNQAB.

## Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET)

"Education and training offered to and for students

(a)　aged 19 years or more

(b)　who are not attending secondary school, or

(c)　who are not attending an institution owned and maintained by a religious society for the purpose of theological training" (TNQAB Act (2020 revised edition)

## Postgraduate

Refers to study following an initial Bachelors degree or to a student who is undertaking such studies. The TQF, like the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework, distinguishes between 'graduate' and 'postgraduate' qualifications, depending on whether the study is in a new field (and so needs introductory knowledge and skills) or is a continuation of studies in the same field. The Australian Qualifications Framework does not make this distinction, so the terms 'graduate' and 'postgraduate' are used interchangeably.

## Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma

Postgraduate qualifications are designed to extend and deepen knowledge and skills through formal instruction and enquiry, often in the same area as the original degree.

## Programme (of learning)

A coherent set of courses, modules, papers, competency packages or units designed to meet the requirements of a qualification.

Programme accreditation

The process used to evaluate an organisation's capability of delivering an education or training programme to the required standards.

Professional certification

A formal certification or endorsement of a person's learning that is recognised by those engaged in the particular profession or industry. The certification may involve passing an examination against standards and may be assessed independently. The certifying body is often a professional association that may have a special mandate or charter, such as a medical College, an accounting body, for example, CPA, or the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS). Other specialist bodies include the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The certifications of many other professional or paraprofessional bodies now have global recognition, e.g. Project Management Institute (PMI), ASQ. See also 'industry certification'.

Provider

Under the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board Act (2020 revised edition), means "means an institution or a private company accredited by the Board to deliver and assess post compulsory education course of study which will conclude with the granting of a qualification approved by the Board". That is, an organisation registered by TNQAB for the purpose of awarding accredited PCET qualifications.

Provider Qualification

A qualification / programme developed and awarded by a registered PCET provider, or the formal certification that a person has successfully achieved learning outcomes for such a qualification.

Qualification

A qualification is formal certification that a person has successfully achieved all learning outcomes of an accredited programme at a specified level of a qualifications framework.

The term can also refer to a required standard definition of the qualification, which must include a title, TQF level and other characteristics.

Qualification component

An identifiable part of a qualification. Each component is a set of learning outcomes that a person must achieve to receive credit towards a qualification. See also 'course' and 'unit of competency'. For National Qualifications, each component is a National Standard.

Qualifications framework

A classification structure, usually national or regional, indicating the levels and types of quality assured educational qualifications that can be formally recognised or registered. See also Tonga Qualifications Framework.

Quality assurance

A generic term for all activities which provide confidence that the educational and training services of an organisation are being delivered effectively, to the required standard, and in line with published goals and objectives.

Recognition

In the context of the TQF, means the acknowledgment by TNQAB of the validity or legality of a qualification or a judgment made by others to quality assure a qualification or programme, without implying the same level of approval that would be given directly by TNQAB.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A term to describe ways in which a person's relevant and current skills and knowledge are formally assessed to determine if they meet the learning outcomes of a qualification or qualification component or another requirement.

Recording

In the context of the TQF, means to set down publicly or officially on the TQF information relating to a registered qualification, without the level of approval required for registration. For example, an individual National Standard is recorded on the TQF but not registered, while a National Qualification made up of National Standards is registered.

Registration (of a qualification)

The process used to determine that a qualification has met the criteria for inclusion in the list of quality assured qualifications on the TQF and the listing or formal registration of the qualification onto the TQF, through a register maintained by TNQAB.

Similar provisions apply to the registration of a credential on the TQF.

Self directed contexts

Contexts of work or learning where a person is able to decide for themselves the nature of the work or learning.

Skill Set

In the context of the TQF, a Skill Set is one or more units of competency in a National Qualification that responds to an established industry, regulatory or licensing need. It is , between 1 and 39 credit points, pegged to a TQF level and is formally assessed. Successful completion leads to a credential but not to a formal TQF qualification.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Means education and training focused on occupational outcomes, defined as comprising "education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods" (UNESCO 2015).

Testamur

A certificate given to a person when they graduate with a formal qualification from an educational institution.

Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF)

A classification structure indicating the levels and types of quality assured formal qualifications that may be offered in Tonga by educational institutions.

Transcript (of results)

In the context of the TQF, an official record of the results achieved by a learner in assessments for study leading to an educational qualification.

Undergraduate

Means a person who is enrolled in a programme of study leading to a Bachelors level qualification or the units in this qualification. See also 'postgraduate'

Unit of competency

A qualification component that specifies a set of learning outcomes for effective performance, usually in an occupational setting, for which competency-based assessment is used.

University

A university is an institution with a wide diversity of teaching and research, typically offering qualifications at the upper levels of a qualifications framework, that: maintains, advances, disseminates, and assists the application of knowledge; has academic freedom and intellectual independence; promotes community learning; and has many staff with postgraduate qualifications.

Volume of learning

The amount of learning that learners need to undertake to achieve a qualification. For the TQF, it is expressed as the expected or notional hours of learning activities that a learner could be expected to complete. See also 'credit value'.

# APPENDIX C    Field of Education Codes for Qualifications

Qualifications range across many fields of learning, or 'fields of education'. In order for people to find their way around the qualifications listed on the TQF, a classification system has been developed, based on those used overseas. This classification system will allow people to quickly locate qualifications on the TQF.

Fields of education are the broadest division in the classification system. They represent aggregations of related knowledge, skills and competencies in a technical, vocational and/or higher education. Each field is split into a number of sub-fields which better define the scope of coverage. Field and/or sub-field names appear in the titles of the qualifications registered on the TQF.

The sub-fields of learning in bold, italicised font are those where qualifications are currently available in Tonga.

| Fields | Sub-Fields |
|---|---|
| 01. Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries | - ***0101 Agriculture***<br>- 0102 Animal Care and Handling<br>- 0103 Equine<br>- 0104 Forestry<br>- ***0105 Horticulture***<br>- 0106 Pest Management<br>- 0107 Pork Production<br>- 0108 Poultry Production<br>- 0109 Rural Contracting<br>- 0110 Seafood<br>- 0111 Wood Harvesting<br>- 0112 Nature Conservation<br>- 0113 Forestry and Wood Technology<br>- ***0114 Agriculture and Livestock***<br>- 0115 Fisheries and Wildlife |
| 02. Business and Commerce | - ***0201 Accounting***<br>- ***0202 Finance***<br>- ***0203 Business Administration***<br>- ***0204 International Business***<br>- 0205 Economics and Accounting<br>- 0206 Management and Human Resources<br>- 0207 Purchasing and Procurement<br>- 0208 Administration<br>- 0209 Public Relations Marketing<br>- 0210 Information Management<br>- 0211 Not For Profit Systems and Structures<br>- 0212 Office Systems<br>- 0213 Public Sector Services<br>- 0214 Insurance and Banking |

| Fields | Sub-Fields |
|---|---|
| 03. Culture, Arts and Crafts | − ***0301 Fine Arts and Design***<br>− ***0302 Design Studies***<br>− ***0303 Multi-media***<br>− 0304 Visual Arts and Photography<br>− 0305 Performing Arts<br>− 0306 Cultural Studies<br>− 0307 Recreation<br>− ***0308 Music***<br>− 0309 Sport<br>− 0310 Electronic media<br>− 0311 Drama<br>− ***0312 Dance***<br>− 0313 Television and Video |
| 04. Education | − ***0401 Teaching***<br>− ***0402 General Education***<br>− ***0403 Early Childhood***<br>− ***0404 Teaching and Learning***<br>− ***0405 Adult Education and Training***<br>− 0406 Adult Literacy Education<br>− 0407 Educational Administration<br>− 0408 Generic Education and Training<br>− ***0409 Pacific Islands Early Childhood Education***<br>− 0410 Special Education<br>− ***0411 Teacher Education***<br>− 0412 Teacher Aids<br>− 0413 Workshop Assistants<br>− 0414 Lab Assistants<br>− 0415 Day Care Centre<br>− 0416 Adult Learning Tutoring |
| 05. Engineering and Manufacturing | − ***0501 Automotive and Mechanical Fitters***<br>− ***0502 General Engineering***<br>− ***0503 Carpentry and Joinery***<br>− ***0504 Electrical Engineering***<br>− ***0505 Panel Beating and Spray Fitting***<br>− ***0506 Refrigeration and Air Conditioning***<br>− 0507 Blaster coating<br>− 0508 Civil Works and Services<br>− 0509 Design<br>− 0510 Electricity Supply<br>− 0511 Electronic Technology<br>− 0512 Highway Construction and Maintenance<br>− 0513 Industrial Measurement and Control<br>− 0514 Mechanical Engineering<br>− 0515 Motor Industry |

| Fields | Sub-Fields |
|---|---|
|  | − 0516 Pavement Surfacing<br>− 0517 Textile |
| 06. Health | − **0601 Nursing**<br>− **0602 Midwifery**<br>− **0603 Dental Support**<br>− **0604 Occupational Health and Safety**<br>− 0605 Curative Health and Rehabilitative Health<br>− 0606 Emergency Services<br>− 0607 Health Studies<br>− 0608 Mental Health<br>− 0609 Natural and Traditional Health and Healing<br>− **0610  Radiography**<br>− **0611 Pharmacy**<br>− **0612 Preventive Health**<br>− 0613 Promotive Health, and Developmental Services<br>− 0614 Public Health |
| 07. Law and Security | − **0701 Criminal Investigation**<br>− **0702 Harms against the person**<br>− **0703 Policing**<br>− **0704 Property Crime and Procedures**<br>− **0705 Safety in Society**<br>− 0706  Biosecurity<br>− 0707 Compliance and Law Enforcement<br>− 0708 Justice in Society and Sovereignty of the State<br>− 0709 Offender Management<br>− 0710 Security<br>− 0711 Justice in Society and Sovereignty of the State |
| 08. Information & Communication Technology | − **0801 Computing**<br>− **0802 Information Technology**<br>− 0803 Communication Technology<br>− 0804 Computer Human Interactions<br>− 0805 Computing Systems Support<br>− 0806 Information Security |
| 09. Social Services/ Service Sector | − **0901 Civil Defence**<br>− **0902 Diving**<br>− **0903 Hospitality**<br>− **0904 Maritime**<br>− **0905 Secretarial Studies**<br>− **0906 Tourism**<br>− **0907 Tourism Management** |

| Fields | Sub-Fields |
|---|---|
| | — *0908 Youth Development*<br>— 0909 Travel<br>— 0910 Transport<br>— 0911 Operations and Logistics<br>— 0912 Personal Care<br>— 0913 Wholesale and Retail<br>— 0914 Consumer Services and Utilities<br>— *0915 Age Care*<br>— *0916 First Aid* |
| 10. Planning and Construction | — *1001 Architecture*<br>— *1002 Building Construction*<br>— *1003 Construction*<br>— 1004 Construction Trade<br>— 1005 Masonry<br>— 1006 Painting and Decorating<br>— *1007 Plumbing,* Gas fitting and Drain laying<br>— 1008 Quantity Surveying<br>— 1009 Surveying<br>— 1010 Design and Management<br>— 1011 Civil Engineering Construction and Electrical Infrastructure Construction |
| 11. Generic Skills | — *1101 Core Generic*<br>— *1102 Communication*<br>— 1103 Literacy<br>— 1104 Numeracy<br>— 1105 Problem Solving<br>— 1106 Team Skills<br>— 1107 Entrepreneurship<br>— 1108 Self Management and Work Ready |

| Fields | Sub-Fields |
|---|---|
| 12. Humanities | − ***1201 Bible Studies***<br>− ***1202 Divinity***<br>− ***1203 Ministerial Formation***<br>− ***1204 Lay Preaching***<br>− ***1205 Theological Studies***<br>− 1206 Christian Ministries<br>− 1207 Christian Studies<br>− 1208 Christian Theology<br>− 1209 Communication Skills<br>− 1210 English<br>− 1211 Health and Physical Education<br>− 1212 Languages<br>− 1213 Pacific Studies<br>− 1214 Religious Studies<br>− 1215 Sports Education |
| 13. Sciences | − ***1301 Mathematics***<br>− ***1302 Science***<br>− 1303 Environment<br>− 1304 Home and Life Sciences<br>− 1305 Statistics and Probability |

It is important to ensure that there is good alignment of fields and sub-fields with other classification systems used in Tonga, and with other international qualification systems. Sub-fields are often further divided into logical clusters of outcomes of learning at qualification component level.

# APPENDIX D    Criteria for the registration of a qualification on the TQF

The table below lists the characteristics of a qualification that need to be met for the qualification to be registered on the TQF. It also shows the evaluation criteria used to check if these characteristics are met.

| Characteristics | Criteria |
|---|---|
| i. Qualification Title | a. The title is indicative of the purpose and outcomes of the qualification.<br>b. The title indicates the qualification type (certificate, diploma, etc) and field or sub-field.<br>c. The title indicates the qualification level<br>d. The title is appropriate and complies with qualification definitions |
| ii. Qualification Purpose Statement | a. There is clear purpose stated for the qualification<br>b. The purpose is related to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs<br>c. The purpose supports the priorities established in the Statement for the Strategic Development Plan Eight (SDP8) of the Government of Tonga |
| iii. Rationale for Qualification | a. The rationale shows how the qualification meets specific needs in the sector for which it was developed<br>b. The range of typical learners is identified and is appropriate<br>c. Evidence is available of the societal and economic benefits of the qualification |
| iv. Qualification Outcomes Statement | a. Outcomes are clearly stated<br>b. Outcomes for the whole qualification are reasonable and reflect the stated purpose<br>c. Outcomes for qualification components are logical |
| v. Qualification Level | a. The level is consistent with the qualification definitions<br>b. The level is consistent with the outcome level descriptors<br>c. The level is consistent with the qualification outcomes statement |
| vi. Credit Value of the Qualification | a. The total number of credits is shown<br>b. The total credit value of the qualification equals the sum of the credits assigned to the components<br>c. The credit total is appropriate and conforms to qualification definitions |

| Characteristics | Criteria |
|---|---|
| vii. Qualification Components | a. For each component descriptor, the purpose, title, credit value, level, learning outcomes and/or defined competencies are clearly stated<br><br>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<br><br>c. The components reflect the purpose, title and level of the qualification<br><br>d. The qualification structure is reasonable and shows an appropriate balance between compulsory and elective components, theoretical and practical requirements |
| viii. Entry Requirements | a. Any entry requirements or pre-requisite qualifications are stated<br><br>b. Entry requirements do not unreasonably exclude individuals because of descent, gender, social origin, place of birth, family status, or special needs<br><br>c. Entry requirements are reasonable for the level of the qualification |
| ix. Learning Assumed to be in Place | 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 |
| x. International Comparability | a. There is a clear and appropriate statement of how the qualification compares with similar qualifications offered internationally |
| xi. Recognition of Prior Learning | 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 |
| xii. Learning Pathways | a. There is a clear and appropriate statement of where the qualification fits into one or more learning pathways |
| 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<br><br>b. The evidence of support is sufficient |

# APPENDIX E    Acknowledgements and References

## Acknowledgements

The Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board wishes to acknowledge, with thanks, that portions of the text in this Third Edition of the Tonga Qualifications Framework have been borrowed or adapted from public documents of other countries or entities, including the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework, the Australian Qualifications Framework and the Pacific Qualifications Framework (a regional referencing framework).

The TNQAB acknowledges with thanks the many stakeholders and staff who have made significant contributions to improving the TQF, culminating in this Third Edition.

## References

Johansson-Fua, S. (2023). Kakala Research Framework. In: Okoko, J.M., Tunison, S., Walker, K.D. (eds) *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods*. Springer Texts in Education. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04394-9_44

UNESCO (2015). Recommendations concerning technical and vocational education and training (TVET), Revised recommendations 2015. Retrieved 9 June 2024 from: UNESCO UNEVOC TVETipedia Glossary: https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary/show=term/term=Technical+and+vocational+education+and+training#start

UNESCO (2022). Towards a Common Definition of Micro-Credentials. Retrieved 7 April 2024 from: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381668

UNESCO IIEP (n.d.). Flexible learning pathways in higher education (webpage). Retrieved 7 April 2024 from: https://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/our-expertise/flexible-learning-pathways-higher-education.

UN IPBES (2019, 2021 reports). UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Retrieved 9 June 2024 from: https://www.ipbes.net/glossary-tag/indigenous-and-local-knowledge#:~:text=Indigenous%20and%20local%20knowledge%20(ILK,another%20and%20with%20their%20environments.

Wiki-Bennett, S. (2024, 29 May). Uncovering Indigenous Insights: Let's Research Together. *Times* Higher Education. Retrieved 9 June 2024 from: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/uncovering-indigenous-insights-lets-research-together.

# APPENDIX F    Related TNQAB Policies and Guidelines

Quality Assurance Policies 2023

Guidelines for National Qualification Development and TQF Registration 2018

Guidelines for Review of Qualifications 2019 (*under review*)

National Qualifications application forms and guides:

- Proposal Report
- ITAC Application
- Template for Development of a National Qualification Descriptor
- Unit of Competency
- Planning to Assess a Unit of Competency
- Template for Registration (qualification descriptor)
- Template for Registration (Units of Competency)
- Validation Form 1 (Qualification Characteristics)
- Validation Form 2 (Units of Competency)

Review of National Qualifications:

- Developer's Review Report
- Form 1 (for Component Units of a Qualification)
- Form 2 (for Qualification Characteristics)

TNQAB Guidelines for Programme Accreditation

Application for Programme Accreditation

TNQAB Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

Application form for approval of changes to Qualifications and Short Courses

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>