REGISTERED
NATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Title:	**National certificate in whale watching and swimming guide level 3**				
Release :	1	**Qualification type:**	National qualification	**TQF level:**	3
Credits :	87	**TQF Registration code:**	QR-03-NQ-005-01-0903-24-01		
Approval date:	13 June 2024	**Next review:**	13 June 2029		

Qualification developers:	1. Tupou Tertiary Institute – Pouono Campus Neiafu, Vava'u; 2. Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) Samoa and Tonga 3. Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC) for whale-watching Tongatapu and Vava'u
Purpose:	The *National Certificate in Whale watching and Swimming Guide Level 3 (NCWGL3)* is for individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in the tourism and hospitality industry in general, and in whale-watching and swimming (*whale-swimming*), in particular. NCWGL3 focuses on workplace competencies in marine biology, marine navigation, marine studies, water safety and rescue, as well as fisheries. The NCWGL3 intends to provide employability and entry-level skills and knowledge for workers in the whale-watching and swimming industry as well as other water leisure activities and adventures. Graduates may be able to work as whale guides, assistant boat skippers, assistant marine engineers, assistant divers, deckhands, marine safety and rescue officers, as well as fisheries officers. The NCWGL3 provides a smoother pathway to the *National Certificate in Whale Guide Level 4 (NCWGL4)*. These two training programmes, together, contribute to a much safer and enjoyable marine environment and tour experience.

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Rationale	Whales are definitely a significant economic resource for Tonga. While whale-watching and swimming with whales (*whale-swimming*) are becoming important sources of income for local families and businesses, the long-term sustainability of this new industry as well as the risks involved are a concern for both the local government and international environmental agencies. The whale watching and swimming industry is definitely important to Tonga's national development. In 2019, the *National Certificate in Whale Guide Level 4* (NCWGL4) became the first training in whale watching and swimming to be developed and quality assured locally and approved for registration on *Tonga Qualifications Framework* (TQF). Although this qualification is still undelivered to date, it marks an unprecedented attempt to develop a national qualification to address concerns related to the long term sustainability of this new industry as well as the diversity of risks involved. The slow uptake of NCWGL4 is attributable to the complexity of the training needs of the whale watching and swimming industry. In particular, factors such as the costs of resources, safety and legal issues, as well as the long-term sustainability of such initiatives, must be carefully considered in the design and development of training programmes to support this important industry. Without effective training programmes available, businesses and individuals who are in direct contact with the whales will remain to be at risk of financial loss, injury, and even death from participating in whale watching and swimming activities. The country as a whole could soon be losing a key industry if quality assured training in whale watching and swimming are not delivered. The NCWGL3 is addressing the gaps identified in the content and structure of the already registered NCWGL4. These two training programmes together have the potential to equip graduates with a more complete set of skills and know-how which is required for a safer and enjoyable whale watching and swimming experience. The development of NCWGL3 is expected to facilitate the uptake and delivery of training programmes in whale watching and swimming. With NCWGL3, there is more attention to acquiring competencies relevant to providing a safer whale watching and swimming business that is compliant with legal and policy requirements. Further, the NCWGL3 together with the NCWGL4, will definitely improve the efficiency of resource use of a training provider delivering them. Overall, NCWGL3 together with NCWGL4, will make these initiatives more sustainable in the long run.
Outcomes Statement	At the end of this training, graduates will demonstrate the following attributes: 1. Communication in English effectively with others at work; also read and respond to workplace information; 2. Operation of both 2-stroke and 4-stroke engines; 3. Entry level marine navigation and engineering;

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4. Manage whale watching and swimming activities as well as the behaviour, and safety of guests.

Qualification Components

This qualification consists of the following units of competency:

	Unit Code	*Unit Title*	*Credit value*
1.	NS113-04	Manage guests in a whale-watching and swimming tour	10
2.	NS114-03	Provide a safe and enjoyable marine experience to guests	10
3.	NS115-03	Provide marine navigation assistance	20
4.	NS116-03	Operate marine outboard engines	25
5.	NS024-04	Provide marine first aid and life support in whale-watching operations (R2)	15
6.	NS073-02	Use basic English in the workplace (R2)	7
		TOTAL CREDITS	87

Note:

a) The above units of competency can be delivered as short courses consisting of one or more units depending on the training needs of a training provider;

b) Approval for short courses should be sought from TNQAB prior to delivery;

c) Competency gained through short courses delivered in the past three years, can be considered for cross-credit.

Entry Requirements

All of the criteria below:

1. Age: must be age 18 or older, and:
2. Communication skills (English): EITHER:
   a. A *pass* grade in Tonga secondary school Form 5 English (or equivalent); OR
   b. Minimum of 4.5 IELTS (or equivalent);
3. Relevant previous experience: EITHER:
   a. Three (3) years (minimum) relevant work experience in travel, tourism or hospitality.); OR
   b. Completion of a TNQAB-accredited Level 2 qualification in a relevant field such as *Tour guide*, *Marine engineering*, *Marine navigation*, *Fisheries*, etc.
4. Can maintain floatation in water and a confident swimmer;

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Learning Assumed to be in Place	Students are assumed to have acquired the following knowledge and skills: 1. Points of the compass; 2. World map; 3. Basic geographical knowledge of Tonga at TQF Level 1; 4. Communication literacy (Tongan and English) at TQF Level 1; 5. Tongan cultural awareness at TQF Level ; 6. ICT literacy at TQF Level 1 7. Generally fit and in good health
International Comparability	This national qualification, NCWGL3, is one of two unique qualifications that cater for the training needs of the Tonga whale watching and swimming industry. The other is NCWGL4. These two national qualifications may well be the only quality assured national qualifications in the Pacific region, if not the world over, that caters for training needs of this important industry. However, some of the component units of NCWGL3 may be comparable to unit standards of existing qualifications in both Tonga and overseas. As with all Tonga national qualifications, there is close alignment to New Zealand and Australian industries. For example: 1. *NS113-03 Manage guests in a whale watch and swimming tour* may be comparable to: a. New Zealand unit standard: i. *23388 V5 Provide support to a person whose behaviour presents challenges in a health or wellbeing setting* ii. *17593 V6 Apply safe work practices in the workplace* b. Australian unit of competency: i. *SISOSNK201A Demonstrate snorkelling activities* ii. *SISOSNK302A Guide snorkelling* 2. *NS114-03 Provide a safe and enjoyable marine experience to guests* may be comparable to: a. New Zealand unit standards: i. *26541 V3 Demonstrate knowledge of the safe operation of small craft in sight of land;* b. Australian units of competency: i. *MARI003 Comply with regulations to ensure safe operation of a vessel up to 12 metres;* ii. *MARD006 Monitor and control compliance with legislative requirements* iii. *SISOSNK002 Lead snorkelling activities* 3. *NS115-03 Provide marine navigation assistance* may be comparable to: a. New Zealand unit standards: i. *29217 V2 Demonstrate knowledge of maritime rules and navigation;* ii. *19491 V.4 Demonstrate knowledge of using VHF marine radio and an EPIRB*

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	iii. *20029 V2 Demonstrate knowledge of navigation aids in a maritime environment* iv. *19138 V3 Describe weather, climate and micro-climate characteristics, and interpret weather maps for a primary industry operation* b. Australian units of competency: i. *MARN008 Apply seamanship skills aboard a vessel up to 12 metre* ii. *PUAOPE009 Navigate in an aquatic environment* iii. *MARH021 Manage the navigation of a vessel (Release 1)* 4. *NS116-03 Operate of 2-stroke and 4-stroke engines* may be comparable to the: a. New Zealand unit standard: i. *30477 V1 Demonstrate knowledge of petrol and diesel engines* ii. *24294 V2 Demonstrate knowledge of two-stroke petrol engine lubrication, testing and tuning;* b. Australian registered unit of competency: i. *AURRTE006 Diagnose and repair marine outboard engines* ii. *AURRTE011 Overhaul two and four-stroke cycle marine outboard engines* iii. *AURR301102A Diagnose and repair outboard engines and components*
Recognition of Prior Learning	This qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) which considers skills and knowledge gained in different settings including the community, workplace and educational institutions, and in accordance with relevant national and institutional policies and processes. Learners can achieve competence in ways most suited to their individual needs (educational, or work) and aspirations. Assessment for RPL must be undertaken by a qualified assessor. Evidence of skills and knowledge acquired must be shown before recognition can be given. RPL acknowledges existing skills and knowledge gained from previous learning, both formally (e.g. courses or study previously undertaken) and informally (workplace learning, life experiences, and community experiences).
Credit transfer	The *Tonga Qualifications Framework* (TQF) as well as most other Frameworks allow for credit recognition and transfer from other regional or national qualifications through a process of mutual recognition. Credit transfer is a process whereby credits already achieved for one qualification are recognized towards a new qualification. Thus if a learner has obtained the relevant competency (within the past 3 three years) in: 1) A qualification which has been identified as equivalent to NCWGL3, he or she will receive credit for unit standards which have been successfully

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	completed. Evidence of achievement will be required by relevant authorities before credit transfer is approved; 2) A TNQAB approved qualification that contains any of the component units of this national qualification; 3) A TNQAB-approved short course that is made up of any of the component units of this national qualification, he or she may receive cross credit recognition. Evidence of achievement will be required by relevant authorities before credit transfer is approved.
Learning Pathways	**Pathways in:** 1) High School leavers who meet the entry requirements 2) Graduates of other TNQAB-approved level 2 qualifications 3) Mature students and current employees who meet the entry requirements 4) Completion of relevant short courses. **Pathway Out:** 1) National Certificate in Whale-guide Level 4 2) Employment in the whale-watching and whale-swimming sectors; 3) Further studies overseas marine studies, safety and rescue, or tourism and hospitality
Support for Qualification	1) This qualification development is made possible through financial assistance from the regional office of the *Australia Pacific Training Coalition* (APTC) for Samoa and Tonga, and has also gained support of: 2) Fasi and Pouono campuses of *Tupou Tertiary Institute*; 3) Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC) for Vava'u whale-watching and whale-swimming sector; 4) Tonga Ministry of Tourism
Accreditation Requirements	**Human resources:** 1) Trainer: minimum qualification is a TNQAB approved level 4 qualification in an area relevant to whale watching, marine navigation, safety and rescue, on the discretion of the training provider. 2) Boat skipper (licenced); **Documents:** 1) Compilation of printed resources relevant to the component units at the discretion of the training provider; 2) Tonga *Whale Watching Act 2008* (downloadable from the Tonga Crown law online database) 3) Tonga *Whale Watching and Swimming Regulation 2013*(downloadable from the Tonga Crown law online database) 4) Waiver document template 5) Safety briefing procedures 6) Relevant checklists:

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(i) Equipment preparation checklist
(ii) Vessel safety checklist

7) Charts and pictorials of whales
8) World map
9) Map of Tonga
10) Maps of the main island groups of Tonga

Equipment and tools:

1) Boat (at least 7m) and complies with Tonga maritime requirements, and can safely hold 10 people (including skipper/crew) at one time. The boat must have the following resources:
   a) Four-stroke outboard motor of at least 60 horsepower
   b) First-aid kit
   c) Global Positioning System (GPS) installed
   d) VHF radio
   e) Flares
   f) Beacon
   g) Life-jackets (x15)
   h) Life-rings (x2 or more);
   i) Life raft (at least 10 person);
   a) Fire-extinguisher
   b) Mooring robes, size 12mm – 20mm (x10)
   c) Compass (installed on boat or hand held or a mobile phone with relevant compass app installed)
   d) Navigation charts
   e) Navigation slide ruler (x12)
   f) Protractors (x 24)
   g) Scientific calculator (a type that can calculate navigation data)
2) Training workshop (mechanical) with the following resources:
   a) Engines: both 2-stroke and 4-stroke, for training purposes;
   b) Combination spanner set
   c) Ring spanner set
   d) Spanner wrench and socket set
   e) Multi-meter
   f) Compression test meter
   g) Gearbox lubrication tools
3) Open water **swimming gear** (for 5 people) consisting of:
   a) Wetsuit *3mm* (x5)
   b) Mask (x5)
   c) Snorkel (x5)
   d) Fins (adjustable) (x5 pairs)

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