

# NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

TONGA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND ACCREDITATION BOARD (TNQAB)



## TNQAB and qualifications

TNQAB is the agency mandated by Government of Tonga to develop a national *qualifications framework*, as well as relevant systems and processes to ensure that qualifications that are awarded by Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) in Tonga, are held in high regard, both nationally and internationally, in order to help learners succeed in their chosen careers and to contribute Tongan society.

A qualification is a package of standards judged to be worthy of formal recognition<sup>1</sup>. In Tonga, we commonly refer to a qualification as a certificate, diploma or degree gained as a result of satisfying requirements set by an examination authority or accredited provider.<sup>2</sup>

## Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF)

A qualification framework is a tool constructed for use in the development, classification and recognition of qualifications. The Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF), for example, commonly represented by the matrix below, is a 10-level structure in which the numerical value of each level is directly related to the complexity of the qualifications' learning outcomes.

TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK			
LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TITLE		
10			Doctoral degree
9			Master's degree
8	Postgraduate certificate	Postgraduate diploma	Bachelor's degree with Honours
7	Graduate certificate	Graduate diploma	Bachelor's degree
6		Advanced diploma	
5		Diploma	
4	Certificate		
3	Certificate		
2	Certificate		
1	Certificate		

In recognizing the value of this tool to national development in general and education and training in particular, different countries have developed their own

qualifications framework, and are using it as a guide for quality assuring, registering, and accrediting qualifications.

A qualifications framework not only makes it possible to compare different qualifications but it also show how one can progress from one level to another, within and across occupations.

All in all, a qualifications framework is a basis for improving the quality, accessibility, linkages and public or labour market recognition of qualifications within a country and internationally<sup>1</sup>.

## National qualifications

In Tonga, qualifications can be of two broad types:

1. Provider qualifications; and
2. National qualifications.

Provider qualifications are those developed, assessed and awarded by registered providers of education and training which have been accredited by TNQAB. National qualifications, on the other hand, are those which have been developed in accordance with TNQAB guidelines and quality assurance standards. With these definitions, it is important to note that Tonga still does not have a national qualification registered on TQF. All the qualifications which are currently registered on TQF are provider qualifications.

The three existing national qualifications, the *Tonga School Certificate*, the *Tonga Form Six Certificate*, and the *Tonga National Form Seven Certificate*, are not under the TNQAB mandates and therefore are not registered on TQF.

## Uniqueness of national qualifications

1. The development, validation, and review of a national qualification are overseen by a group of qualified and experienced Tonga nationals, referred to as a *Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC)*, who have been carefully identified and contracted from the Tongan public, and in accordance to the TNQAB Act 2004<sup>2</sup>;
2. The national qualifications development, registration, and review are in accordance with TNQAB quality assurance processes and procedures;
3. The titles of national qualifications bear the word "National", or "Tonga", or "Tongan"<sup>3</sup>;
4. National qualifications can be offered by any provider that satisfies TNQAB requirements; and

<sup>1</sup> ILO (2007). An introductory guide to national qualifications framework: conceptual and practical issues for policy makers.

<sup>2</sup> Tonga National Qualifications Accreditation Board Act 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Regulations 2010 Part III Section 14.

- National qualifications are the property of the Government of Tonga.

### Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC)

A ITAC is a group of Tongan nationals who act as advisors of national qualifications. Institutions that take on the responsibility of developing national qualifications are required to establish ITACs.

The *learning fields* in which national qualifications are developed are listed in the TQF Policies 2016 <sup>4</sup> which is downloadable from the TNQAB website ([www.tnqab.com](http://www.tnqab.com)).

Those who are interested in becoming members of specific ITACs must utilize a TNQAB-designed form to apply to the developer of the national qualification. This form is also available for download from the TNQAB website.

**BECOME A MEMBER**

**INDUSTRY TRAINING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ITAC)**

Photo credit: Booking.com

**HELP US HELP YOU HELP TONGA!**

**We need ladies and gentlemen as advisors of national qualifications**

Talk to us at TNQAB: Visit our office, 1st floor, Molisi City Central, Nuku'alofa

### Benefits of national qualifications

The following are just a few of the many advantages of national qualifications:

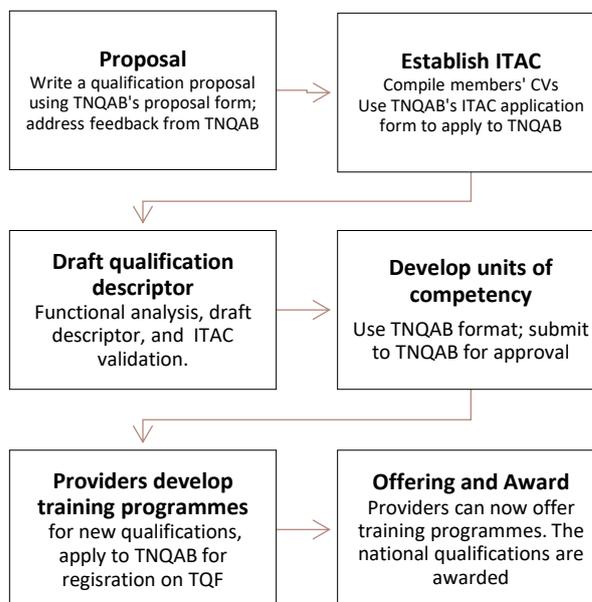
- They ensure consistency in the learning outcomes of training programmes designed by different providers that enrol learners to pursue these qualifications;
- They reflect the needs and aspirations of Tonga as a nation, which means they are better at equipping learners to make active use of the opportunities in their local communities, and the domestic economy;

- They are recognised across the region and internationally, which means holders of national qualifications are employable into attractively remunerated occupations both locally and overseas;
- The management of national qualification information is adding significant flexibility to the process of pursuing a qualification, with the recognition of prior learning, qualification components, and short courses;
- Overall, the above ensure that national qualifications are of better quality than their counterparts.

### How to develop a national qualification

Both government and non-government ministries and agencies, providers, professional groups and associations, can develop national qualifications. Interested parties are requested to express their interest to TNQAB. Application forms and other key information will be made available upon request.

The flowchart below shows the main processes of the development of national qualifications.



### Where and How to find us

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<sup>4</sup> Tonga Qualifications Framework Policies 2016 Appendix 3 page 31.