

# TNQAB NEWS

Tonga National Qualifications Authority Board Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 4, 2020

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## From the CEO

Welcome to the final TNQAB Newsletter for 2020!

In true 2020-fashion, the past months have continued to be identified by plenty of activity across *Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board* (TNQAB) and the wider sector.

This quarter, TNQAB held different quality assurance activities, including panel training, audit workshops, qualification reviews and accreditation training. Attendees have reported that they found the activities useful, and our technical learning and feedback will be worthwhile to us as we plan our engagement activities for 2021. These activities form part of our response to the needs of the associated stakeholders, notably registered providers, and clarify and improve TNQAB's responsibility and regulatory culture.



**Dr. 'Opeti Pulotu, Chief Executive Officer, TNQAB**

From now on into 2021, our brand refresh will be vital in strengthening our communication and engagement activities and promoting TNQAB's regulatory approach, and augmenting our functions and capabilities as the national regulator.

There is also called for increased education and consultation with the sector, particularly the registered providers. I have been humbled to witness first-hand that many important consultation and training projects continue to gather momentum as we reach the end of the year.

TNQAB family is keen to hear from the associated stakeholders, providers, and learners. We constantly work through all these key quality assurance activities and how they can be best applied. These key regulatory practices are important in helping us to understand the opportunities and risks in the TVET and Higher Education sector. Henceforth, we can ensure our regulatory strategies and approaches are effective and efficient, and the quality of Tonga's education remains at a high standard.

Lastly, as we fast approach the end of the year, I am incredibly gratified with what TNQAB and the associated stakeholders achieved in 2020 to maintain a quality and prospering post-compulsory education and training sector. This is especially the situation that presented the distinct challenges brought by the global pandemic. On behalf of the TNQAB family, the Chairman of the Board, Hon. Hu'akavameiliku and the Board of Directors, and staff, I am profoundly grateful to you all for your help, positive contribution, and constructive feedback over the year, supporting us in collaborating for better regulation and quality assurance practice. I wish you all a blessing, a delightful and cherished holiday season and am looking forward to work with you next year!

Malo mo e lotu,

Opeti Pulotu, *PhD*

(CEO-TNQAB)

## Editors

1. *Miss Siniva Samani*
2. *Mr. Vilimaka Foliaki*

We also welcome contributions from our stakeholders and readers!

We appreciate all your contributions.

Please email us your articles and high definition photographs.

Tel: 28136  
Email: [CEO@tnqab.to](mailto:CEO@tnqab.to)

Malo fau!

# Quality audit

## 1st training for quality auditors *by Mrs Ikatonga Hingano*

October 2020 was a busy month. Two training workshops were conducted on same day (9th of October), one on quality audit which was held at TNQAB and is covered immediately below, and the other on qualification review held at *LongoLongo* LDS Hall and is covered on pages 4 and 5 of this Issue.

Two trainings were conducted on quality audit this quarter.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020, eight industry professionals were invited to TNQAB to participate in the first quality audit training. These individuals were selected to assist with three quality audits which have been scheduled for 2020, for *Montfort Technical Institute* (MTI), *Ahopanilolo Technical Institute* (ATI) and *Christ University in Pacific* (CUP).



The audit panel members who participated in the audit panel training on the 8th of October, 2020 and Mrs. Ikatonga Hingano and the TNQAB Deputy CEO, Mrs. Pauline Moa, who both administered the training.

The objective of the first audit training was for the participants to understand their roles as audit panelists. The participants were given the opportunity to understand the conditions of their contract, as well as a *conflict of interest* declaration form and the *code of ethics*. The participants also carried out mock interviews to learn how to conduct such activity in an audit.

The workshop sessions were informative and engaging and were delivered by Mrs Ikatonga Hingano and Mrs Pauline Moa. The organization wishes to thank these participants for consenting to become quality audit panelists and for committing to this training. END

## 2nd training for quality auditors *by Mrs Ikatonga Hingano*

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 2020, a bigger group of nineteen (19) representatives from local PCET providers, were invited for the second quality training workshop which was held at the *House of Tonga*. The objective of this training was to increase provider awareness of the quality audit process.

## 2nd quality audit training *by Mrs Ikatonga Hingano* ....Continue!

The workshop was divided into two parts, and once again facilitated by Mrs Ikatonga Hingano and Mrs Pauline Moa.

Mrs Hingano led the first part and focused her session on the quality audit process, as well as the documents which are required both before and after a quality audit site visit.

Mrs Hingano concluded with a discussion of the required evidences.



TNQAB CEO Dr. 'Opeti Pulotu delivering the opening address for the 2nd Quality audit workshop, 30 Nov 2020.



Participants in the 2nd Quality audit workshop 30 Nov 2020

## Quality audit process: *what and why?*

by Vilimaka Foliaki

In brief, a training provider (PCET) is only granted accreditation to deliver education in Tonga when it has met three (3) quality standards commonly referred to as *Accreditation Standards 1, 2, and 3*.

Accreditation is granted only for a renewable term of 2 years (maximum). Once a provider is granted accreditation to deliver a specific training programme, TNQAB also schedules this provider into its quality audit timetable and informs the provider.

A quality audit is conducted only to providers that have already been granted a TNQAB accreditation status to ensure they are consistently complying with the criteria of Accreditation Standards 1, 2, and 3.

Depending on the need or scope of audit to be conducted by TNQAB, there are three (3) main types:

1. *Full audit* - this involves an evaluation against all the criteria of the three quality standards.
2. *Focused audit* - involves an evaluation against specific elements of the three quality standards.
3. *Special audit*— when major concerns about a provider have been identified.



The participants at the audit workshop training conducted on the 30th of November, 2020 at the House of Tonga.

## 2nd quality audit training by Mrs Ikatonga Hingano *Continue!*

In the second part of the workshop, Mrs Pauline Moa elaborated on the onsite audit visit and informed participants of what is expected of PCET providers during a site visit as well as the documents required to be submitted for the quality audit.

The workshop was an opportunity for participants not only to gain a better understanding of the audit process but to also share their experiences from their own workplaces and to voice common concerns.

The workshop was well-received and enjoyed by the participants.

TNQAB wishes to acknowledge the World Bank's *Skills and Employment for-Tonga* (SET) Project, for funding this training. Further, TNQAB is also very grateful to the representatives from the PCET providers who participated in this training.



Participants in the 2nd Quality audit workshop 30 Nov 2020. At the centre is Ms Lisia Latu of the World Bank's SET Project, and Ms Liuaki Fusitu'a, Dean of TIOE



# Qualification review

## Training for qualification reviewers *by Mr. Kisione Manu*

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, at the Longolongo LDS Hall, Mr Kisione Manu, the team leader of the Qualifications Framework Division, conducted a workshop for qualification reviewers. This is one of two training workshops conducted by TNQAB on this same day. The other on quality audit is being covered on pages 2 and 3.

This is the first training workshop to be conducted on this important process.

Targeting training providers whose courses are due for audit and review, this workshop attracted 34 participants most of whom are in charge of quality assurance in their respective institutions. The presentation was based on the review of registered qualifications to inform providers of the processes involved .



The participants at first Qualification Review training workshop held on 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 at the Longolongo Latter-Day Saints Hall.

Mr. Manu emphasized to participants the need for them to confirm during a review if they had made changes to the accredited programme and if so, to decide if the changes are significant enough to warrant a resubmission of the programme for accreditation.

The participants were grateful for this workshop. However, many expressed their need for frequent and regular training on the qualification review, and if possible, to be conducted in their individual schools to give them more time and opportunity to engage with the TNQAB staff overseeing the qualification review process.



Dr. Opeti Pulotu, (TNQAB CEO), delivering the welcome speech to the congregation during the training workshop.

**TNQAB welcomes training requests from providers!**

Please don't hesitate to contact TNQAB with your training needs.

Telephone: 28136

Email: [CEO@tnqab.to](mailto:CEO@tnqab.to)

## Qualification review

by *Kisone Manu*

As stipulated in the TNQAB Act 2004 Part IV Section 17:

“(1) All registered providers shall be required to undertake reviews of their courses and units of study.

(2) The review under subsection (1) shall include investigation of the following:

(a) ability of the provider to continue their approved educational provision;

(b) the standard of education content of the approved course of study;

(c) the appropriateness of the qualification; and

(d) resources provided for the delivery of the course of study.

(3) A review carried out under this section shall be conducted every 2 years.”

## Why review your qualifications?

by

*Vilimaka Foliaki*

People’s needs for skills and knowledge change with time.

Thus reviewing your qualifications ensures currency and relevance of the skills and knowledge with which successful students graduate



Mr. Kisone Manu, the head of the Qualification Framework Division, delivering the presentation on the Qualification Review during the workshop training.

## A qualification review: a ‘fit for purpose’ assessment

by *Vilimaka Foliaki*

The review of a qualification is an opportunity for developers of qualifications and providers of education and training to take stock of their services especially their training programmes to see whether they are still fit for purpose.

It is an opportunity for developers of qualifications to assess how:

1. well their qualifications are responding to the purposes they were initially developed for;
2. much those initial ‘needs’ the qualifications were developed in the first place to address, may have changed and how these changes could be factored into the existing design and structure of the qualification.

Our registered qualifications, through our training programmes, are one of the main means through which our students gain the skills, knowledge, and expertise to respond to the challenges they face in contemporary society.

Reviewing our qualifications is not an exercise to be conducted by an individual staff or provider, in isolation and independent of the current needs of stakeholders.



Attentive participants during the qualification review workshop, 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2020

# Stakeholder outreach to Vava'u!

## TNQAB joining a Doe-PCREEE Investment Promotion *by Vilimaka Foliaki*

TNQAB also welcomes invitations from stakeholders to collaborate in initiatives for our mutual benefit. On the 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021, Mr. Vilimaka Foliaki, PQO- National Qualifications, was invited to be part of a team from the Tonga Department of Energy (DoE) and the SPC's *Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE)* to travel to Vava'u on a Joint DoE-PCREEE Awareness and Investment Promotion visit.

The team was led by the Director of the Tonga Department of Energy, Dr. Tevita Tukunga, and assisted by Mr. Paea Tau'aika, Mr. Jesse Benjamin of PCREEE, and Miss Darlen Lovi, a lecturer from UPNG.

The visit targeted the local energy industry entrepreneurs as well as high schools and community leaders.



Participants in the Conference on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, Free Wesleyan Church Hall, Neiafu, Vava'u, 13th October 2020. Middle-row: 1st from left is Ms Lucy Fa'anunu (OIC MEIDECCC, Vava'u), 2nd last same row is Dr. Tevita Tukunga (Director DoE, MEIDECC), Mr. Vilimaka Foliaki (TNQAB), behind is Mr. Paea Tauaika of PCREEE. Front-row 3rd from left is Mr. Jesse Benjamin

The activities which were used to promote sustainable energy and energy efficiency in Vava'u included a half-day conference with invited stakeholders on Tuesday 13th October. There were also site visits to Saineha High School and Kelana High School on Wednesday 14th October.

On the first day of the Vava'u visit, invited participant stakeholders were welcomed by Mrs Lucy Fa'anunu, Officer-in-Charge, MEIDECC, Vava'u Office, to a half-day conference held at the Free Wesleyan Church Hall in Neiafu. A presentation delivered by Mr. Foliaki in relation to two national qualifications in sustainable energy which were currently under development by PCREEE, attracted interests from secondary schools providers.

During the conference, stakeholders also showed interests in other registered national qualifications, especially those in Whale Guide, Food and Beverages, as well as Cookery.

TNQAB wishes to thank Dr. Tukunga, the PCREEE team as well as the CEO of MEIDECC, Mr. Paula Ma'u, for the excellent support and collaboration they have shown in this important initiative.



# Quality assurance of education: a business for all stakeholders

by Vilimaka Foliaki

Education is a human right, and we all have a part to play to ensure that that education is of the highest quality possible.

Yeah! Easier said than done!

Education is everyone's business! And that often makes quality assurance of education tricky business.

As long as someone can speak or write or use social media, he has a point worth paying attention to.

Everyone has something to say about education. Everyone! And that's where the solution lies. Everyone! Us, *stakeholders*, together!

Through working together, it's easier to realise that even though we are under different ministries or churches and having access to different quality and quantity of resources, we are all aiming at achieving the same goal.

Quality assuring education becomes an enjoyable and fulfilling undertaking when stakeholders work together, in a spirit of positive interdependence, to pursue a common purpose.

That level of awareness can move mountains!



Ms Darlen Lovi speaking to senior students at Kelana High School, encouraging girls to pursue careers and further education in sustainable energy and energy efficiency.

## Extremes of resources! by Vilimaka Foliaki

During the site visits, the team delivered speeches to senior science students on career and further training pathways in the areas of sustainable energy and energy efficiency.

The team visited electrical engineering facilities for training high school students at *Kelana High School* and *Saineha High School*.

It was encouraging to see how well aware these schools are with sustainable energy and energy efficiency. Both institutions have solar powered electricity.

However, it was most heartening to witness how Kelana manages with the bare necessity of resources, a contrast to those available for students in more well equipped electrical engineering laboratory at Saineha.



Darlen is marvelled at the creativity shown by Kelana High School in how they make do with the most basic of resources in their Electrical engineering workshop



A 'grab-n-go' survival kit, one for every student enrolled in Electrical engineering at Saineha High School



Inside Saineha's training laboratory for electrical engineering, Mr Paea Tau'aika is speaking with a staff and the Principal of the institution

# TQF Registration

## Validation of national qualifications *by Vilimaka Foliaki*

Validation of qualifications is one of the quality assurance processes required of all national qualifications which are developed for registration on the Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF). On Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> to Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, a five member registration panel met at TNQAB to validate and endorse two new national qualifications in sustainable energy:

1. National Certificate in Sustainable Energy Level 1
2. National Certificate in Sustainable Energy Level 2

The panel consisted of Mr. Timote Tu'ipulotu (Project manager, Tonga Power Limited), Mr. Painitu'uua Lie (Graduate engineer, Tonga Power Limited), Mr. Fe'ao Teutau (General manager, Kingdom Energy), Mr. Kaufana Valita (Deputy Technical Officer, Electricity Commission), and Mrs. Lesieli Tupola (Quality Assurance Officer, TNQAB).



Sustainable Energy Registration Panel Meeting : Clockwise from top: Mrs Lesieli Tupola, , Mr. Kaufana Valita, Mr. Teutau Fe'ao, Mr. Paini Lie, Mr. Timote Tu'ipulotu, Mr. Vilimaka Foliaki.

This meeting consisted of a one day training of the panelists on the required processes and a 3-day validation of the two national qualifications. The training as well as the validation of the qualifications were facilitated by Mr. Vilimaka Foliaki, PQO-National qualifications.

This registration panel meeting is of particular significance as it is the first time a panel is utilized to validate a qualification before it is approved for TQF-registration.



## The validation process

by Vilimaka Foliaki

In a nutshell, validation is a process carried out to assess the validity of a process or product. It is carried out in many of work contexts.

In quality assurance of education, apart from the type of validation that is being covered here, there is also assessment validation.

The validation discussed in these two pages refer to the validation of a newly developed national qualification. It is a process carried out to ensure that the characteristics of the proposed national qualification, including each unit of competency, meet the needs of stakeholders and are technically correct.

It involves a critical evaluation of all aspects of the qualification, from clarity and appropriateness of language used by the developer to issues related to compliance with TNQAB quality standards.

This type of validation is an important process because it not only ensures that the qualification is error-free but it also demonstrates to TNQAB that the qualification developer has consulted widely with stakeholders and has listened to their feedback.

Every national qualification that is developed for TQF-registration must be subjected to this process.

## Validation of national qualifications *by Vilimaka Foliaki (Continue...)*

The meeting was opened by Dr. 'Opeti Pulotu, CEO for TNQAB, who emphasized the critical role of this important partnership between the industry and TNQAB in the assurance of quality education and training for post compulsory education and training in Tonga.



TNQAB CEO, Dr. 'Opeti Pulotu, delivering a welcome speech to open the panel meeting

## Successful TQF registration! *by Vilimaka Foliaki*

The Board of Directors of TNQAB, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 2020, approved the TQF-registration of the following national qualifications:

1. National Certificate in Sustainable Energy Level 1
2. National Certificate in Sustainable Energy Level 2

These are the two new national qualifications which were validated a month earlier, and covered on the previous page.

These qualifications were developed and submitted for TQF registration by the *Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE)* and the *Department of Energy* of the *Tonga Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC)*. This qualification development initiative was made possible through financial support from the *EU-PacTVET* Project.

## What next? *by Vilimaka Foliaki*

Training providers who may be interested in delivering the necessary training, leading to the award of these national certificates are requested to contact TNQAB by contacting telephone 28136 or by visiting the TNQAB office, Level 2 of Molisi City Central building on Salote Road, Nuku'alofa.

The qualifications (including their component units) can be also downloaded from the TNQAB website through the following links:

1. Main qualification descriptor: <http://www.tnqab.com/providers-portal/registered-qualification>
2. Qualification component descriptors: <http://www.tnqab.com/providers-portal/registered-national-standard>

# Major policy development

## Review of the current *TNQAB Act 2016*, a momentous event *by 'Amelia Tohu'ia Manuofetoa*

“It is our task to think BIG, to bring success...”

The focus of the Policy unit is the TNQAB Act, Regulations, policies, and procedures and how they assist stakeholders to reach the threshold of quality education. In addition, the main responsibilities of the unit are vested in the Act and important documents of the organization; tasks like developing new policies and reviewing existing ones, monitoring internal compliance with organizational policies and conducting training on the TNQAB policies.

A major task that involved the TNQAB Policy unit in the second half of 2020 was the review of the TNQAB Act 2016. The Government of Australia, through *Tonga Skills*, funded this important project which is currently in phase 2 and is expected to be completed in April 2021.

The Policy unit assisted this project by compiling and sending all TNQAB approved policies and guidelines to the legal adviser, Ms Sela Bloomfield, who is contracted to conduct the review process. It is anticipated that when this is complete, the potential benefits include the following:

1. Improved clarity of the organization's processes in its policies, guidelines, and other important documents
2. Better relationships with stakeholders
3. More opportunities available to benefit both TNQAB and its stakeholders
4. Improved consistency in our working documents
5. More sustainable and inclusive development in necessary areas
6. Effect positive changes in Tongan society
7. Promote the organization's vision, mission and goals.

Let's hope for great return from this collective task. This future success may greatly attribute to your work behind the scene, patience and support. May I encourage each one of us to keep steering ahead with a purpose to complete this important project. I must leave you with a simple question: “What you may give up, in order for us to go up?”

Finally, on behalf of the CEO and the organization, I would like to acknowledge the Australian Government through *Tonga Skills* for funding this initiative as well as the legal adviser, Mrs. Sela Bloomfield, for carry out an exceedingly tough task. Let's not stop praying for cooperation until this Act Review Project is complete.

## The TNQAB Act

*by Vilimaka Foliaki*

Everything that TNQAB carries out is grounded on the laws of Tonga.

The TNQAB Act is the backbone of all of our quality assurance standards and processes. It's the lifeblood of education in Tonga.

Without a quality TNQAB Act, Tonga education is likely to lose its luster to rear the ugly head of a development deprived Tongan society.

But like almost everything else, the currency and relevance of the TNQAB Act are constantly being challenged by the changing time.

Although having it reviewed is a humongous undertaking that requires great financial commitment and time, having the reviewed version approved will be a major accomplishment for TNQAB, especially for the CEO, Dr. 'Opeti Pulotu who has been instrumental in coordinating and driving this important exercise.

We expect significant changes to be brought about once the review is granted Cabinet approval.



# Ending the year on a high!

## TNQAB 2020 End of year function *by Siniva Samani*

On Friday the 11th of December, TNQAB hosted its end of year function at the *Waterfront* restaurant, to celebrate the challenges faced, lessons learnt, and accomplishments reached during the year.

The staff members were joined by members of the Board of Directors and together, we enjoyed an evening of good food, fine entertainment, inspiring speeches and lively conversations and good banter.



The front table guests (L-R): Tatafu Moeaki, Hon. Siaosi Sovaleni, Dr. Viliami Fifita and Dr. Opeti Pulotu.

The organization would like to thank the Minister of Education for gracing this event with his presence and also Tatafu Moeaki, his lovely wife and Dr. Viliami Fifita, both members of the Board of Directors.

Thank you also to all the staff members and their significant others for partaking in this joyous event and finally, the organization social committee is especially acknowledged for organizing this final event for the year, which was enjoyed by all.

On behalf of the CEO, we would like to wish all stakeholders and PCET providers who work in partnership with TNQAB to ensure that quality education and learning is practiced in higher education institutions in Tonga, a very merry Christmas and best wishes for 2021.

## TNQAB 2020 End of year function *by Siniva Samani . . . . . Continue*



Mrs Pauline Moa, the Deputy CEO delivering the opening speech for the event.



Tatafu Moeaki, the guest of honor for the night, delivering a speech.



And then....Ikatonga Hingano, Tohu'ia Manuofetoea and Lapulou Tu'ipulotu-'Enosi enjoying the party.



## TNQAB 2020 End of year function *by Siniva Samani ..... Continue!*



Vilimaka Foliaki, saying a prayer to bless the food before we feasted.



Some of the TNQAB staff members after the formalities of the event, were completed



This table was the life of the party! This group proved that green coconuts can make you tipsy



This after-party