

# **TONGA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND ACCREDITATION BOARD**



**TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK POLICIES**

**2009**

## Table of Contents

1. PREFACE.....	3
2. TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW.....	4
3. QUALIFICATIONS REGISTRATION ON THE TQF.....	6
4. QUALIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS.....	6
4.1 Qualification Purpose Statement.....	7
4.2 Qualification Title.....	7
4.3 Rationale for the Qualification.....	8
4.4 Qualification Outcome Statement.....	8
4.5 Qualification Levels.....	8
4.6 Credit Values .....	8
4.7 Qualification Components .....	9
4.8 Entry Requirements .....	10
4.9 Learning Assumed to be in Place.....	10
4.10 International Comparability of the Qualification.....	10
4.11 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) .....	11
4.12 Learning Pathways.....	11
4.13 Support for the Qualification .....	11
4.14 Layout, Formatting and Language of Qualification Description.....	11
4.15 Notes .....	11
5. QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW .....	11
6. DEREGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS .....	12
7. REGAINING REGISTERED STATUS FOR A QUALIFICATION.....	12
8. COMPLIANCE NOTICES .....	12
9. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.....	13
APPENDIX 1: QUALIFICATION DEFINITIONS.....	14
1.1 Certificates (Levels 1 to 4).....	14
1.2 Diplomas (Levels 5 and 6).....	14
1.3 Bachelor Degrees .....	15
1.4 Graduate Certificates .....	16
1.5 Graduate Diplomas .....	16
1.6 Postgraduate Qualifications .....	17
APPENDIX 2: TQF OUTCOME LEVEL DESCRIPTORS .....	18
APPENDIX 3: CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS ON THE TQF.....	20
APPENDIX 4: LEARNING FIELDS OF QUALIFICATIONS AND THEIR COMPONENTS.....	22
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	27

## 1. PREFACE

In 1987, Tonga Cabinet approved the establishment of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB). The Board aims to strengthen post compulsory education and training (PCET) by setting standards and guidelines for providers, their courses of study (programmes) and the qualifications they offer.

One of the Board's key duties, as set out in Part II Section 8 of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Act 2004, is to:

*Develop a national qualification framework for post compulsory education, training.....*

The nature of the national qualifications framework is specified in the TNQAB Regulations 2008 Part III Sections 13 and 14:

13. *The National Qualifications Framework shall:*
  - (a) *consist of levels defined by a set of level descriptors relating to the complexity of the learning outcomes attained; and*
  - (b) *include all post compulsory education and training qualifications that have been accredited by the Board or by an overseas quality assurance agency recognised by the Board.*
14. (1) *Each qualification on the National Qualifications Framework shall have a statement of learning outcomes which includes:*
  - (a) *what the whole qualification represents in terms of the application of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes; and*
  - (b) *the components of the qualification which, in their combination, make up the whole qualification.*
- 14.(2) *Each qualification on the National Qualifications Framework shall have a credit value attached to it.*
- 14.(3) *Each qualification shall be assigned to one of the levels of the National Qualifications Framework.*
- 14.(4) *Three broad types of qualifications shall be placed on the National Qualifications Framework – degrees, diplomas and certificates.*
- 14.(5) *Each qualification shall be defined by characteristics and credit requirements based on those listed in Schedule B<sup>1</sup>.*
- 14.(6) *The terms “Tonga”, “Tongan” and “National” in relation to qualifications shall only be used in the titles of the Board approved qualifications that have been developed nationally.*

This booklet describes Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF) policies in more detail and defines the characteristics of the qualifications that will be registered on it.

---

<sup>1</sup> The qualification titles and characteristics defined in Schedule B of the Regulations are detailed in Appendix 1 of this document.

## 2. TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

- a) The Tonga Qualifications Framework is a way of classifying quality assured qualifications according to levels related to the complexity of the learning outcomes attained.
- b) The Tonga Qualifications Framework:
- Includes all the post compulsory education and training qualifications available in Tonga that have been accredited by the TNQAB or by an overseas quality assurance agency recognised by the Board;
  - Is compatible with qualification frameworks developed and implemented by other Pacific nations and worldwide;
  - Provides a structure for establishing the interrelationships of qualifications;
  - Facilitates national and international comparability of qualifications;
  - Facilitates understanding of the knowledge, skills and attributes graduates have achieved;
  - Improves the transparency of and access to qualifications;
  - Facilitates the matching of skills demanded by industry to the supply of skilled workers;
  - Is flexible and able to accommodate the development of new qualification types and specialisations as the need arises;
  - Provides opportunities for career development and clear and flexible pathways;
  - Facilitates the recognition of prior learning and current competencies; and
  - Provides opportunities to facilitate the pursuit of lifelong learning;
- c) The Tonga Qualifications Framework has ten levels and is comprised of qualifications that are registered in accordance with qualification definitions detailed in Appendix 1, and that have the characteristics detailed in Section 4 below. Each qualification is registered at one of the ten levels depending on the complexity of the knowledge, skills, processes or responsibilities that are being recognised. Level 1 is the least complex and Level 10 is the most complex. These levels do not equate to years spent learning, but reflect the outcomes of each qualification. Of the ten levels, there are four certificate levels, two diploma levels, one bachelors degree level and three postgraduate levels, as shown below:

## *Tonga Qualifications Framework*

<b>Level</b>	<b>Qualification Title</b>
<b>10</b>	Doctoral Degree
<b>9</b>	Masters Degree
<b>8</b>	Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate, Bachelor Degree with Honours
<b>7</b>	Bachelor Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate
<b>6</b>	Advanced Diploma
<b>5</b>	Diploma
<b>4</b>	Certificate Level 4
<b>3</b>	Certificate Level 3
<b>2</b>	Certificate Level 2
<b>1</b>	Certificate Level 1

- d) Each level of the Tonga Qualifications Framework is characterised by level descriptors that define the learning outcomes of the qualification in terms of knowledge and understanding, competence, skills and responsibility.
- e) Each qualification registered on the Framework is also defined in terms of its purpose, title, rationale, credit value, components, entry criteria and how it relates to other qualifications.
- f) TNQAB's programme accreditation processes are used to confirm the provider's capability to offer a programme of learning leading to the award of the qualification. These processes include the registration of the qualification on the TQF.
- g) The Tonga Qualifications Framework is also supported by the following processes:
- Registration of education and training providers;
  - Quality audit and review of education and training providers;
  - Development and implementation of national qualifications; and

- Recognition of prior learning and non-formal learning.

### **3. QUALIFICATIONS REGISTRATION ON THE TQF**

- Every qualification to be registered on the TQF must meet all the Criteria for Qualification Registration summarized in Appendix 3 and detailed in Section 4<sup>2</sup>.
- TNQAB may consult with relevant international providers/institutions prior to registering qualifications at level 7 and above on the TQF, in order to ascertain the international academic and professional credibility of the qualification<sup>3</sup>.
- Individual components of qualifications<sup>4</sup> cannot be registered on the TQF. The TQF is a register of complete qualifications only.
- Where a new qualification has been developed to replace an existing registered qualification, no current learner should be disadvantaged. Transition arrangements should be documented that provide:
  - Specified time limits for the completion of the existing qualification
  - Credit transfer or exemptions for specified components
  - An appeals mechanism
  - How the arrangements will be managed

### **4. QUALIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS**

Before each qualification is registered on the TQF the following characteristics must be described:

- Purpose Statement
- Title
- Rationale
- Outcome Statement
- Level
- Credit Value
- Qualification Components
- Entry Requirements
- Learning Assumed to be in Place
- International Comparability
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Learning Pathways
- Support for the Qualification

<sup>2</sup>See also “Guidelines for Registration of Qualifications on the TQF” (separate document)

<sup>3</sup>Including Bachelors, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas, Masters, Doctorates

<sup>4</sup>Components of a qualification are also known as courses, modules, units, papers, work-based components.

#### 4.1 Qualification Purpose Statement

- a) The purpose statement identifies who the qualification is for and how it meets the needs of the individual, profession, workplace and/or community for which it is designed.
- b) The purpose statement should succinctly capture what the qualifying learner will know and be able to do on achievement of the qualification.

#### 4.2 Qualification Title

- a) All qualifications registered on the TQF are assigned a title based on the qualification definition that they most closely reflect (see Appendix 1).
- b) 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.
- c) The title must contain a TQF level indicator.
- d) The terms Tonga, Tongan and National must only be used in the titles of Board approved qualifications that have been developed nationally.
- e) For qualifications that have been developed by a particular provider or organisation, the title includes the name of the provider or organisation that developed and owns the qualification.
- f) The title of the qualification must be classified according to the field or subfield of the learning (see Appendix 4). The classification(s) 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.
- g) The title includes the developer/owner of the qualification (or National/Tonga if a national qualification), the type of qualification (Certificate, Diploma, etc), its field or sub-field (Business, Building, Engineering, etc) and its level (for certificates and diplomas). Qualifiers<sup>5</sup> may be included in brackets after the qualification field, if required. For example: “*National Certificate in Building (Carpentry) Level 2*”; “*XYZ Institute Certificate in Computing (Intermediate) Level 2*”; “*C University Bachelor of Arts (Tourism Management)*”. These and other examples are listed in the following table:

<b>Developer</b>	<b>Qualification Type</b>	<b>Field or Sub-Field</b>	<b>Qualifier</b>	<b>TQF Level</b>
National	Certificate	Building	(Carpentry)	Level 2
Institute XYZ	Certificate	Computing	(Intermediate)	Level 3
National	Diploma	Business	(Administration)	<i>Diploma</i>
Polytechnic B	Advanced Diploma	Engineering	(Mechanical)	<i>Adv Diploma</i>
University C	Bachelor	Arts	(Tourism Management)	<i>Bachelor</i>

<sup>5</sup> For example, the qualifier could be a sub-field, a domain of learning, an international qualification name (such as “Master Class V” in the maritime sub-field)

### **4.3 Rationale for the Qualification**

- a) The rationale should indicate how the qualification meets the specific needs in the sector for which it has been developed.
- b) The range of typical learners should be clearly identified.
- c) The rationale should give evidence as to how the qualification will provide benefits to society and to the economy.

### **4.4 Qualification Outcomes Statement**

- a) Each qualification registered on the TQF has an outcome statement that defines what the whole qualification represents in terms of the application of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.
- b) Qualifications registered on the TQF are defined primarily by such outcome statements and only secondarily by input definitions such as entry requirements and duration.
- c) The qualification outcomes statement should be as specific as possible and allow meaningful comparisons to be made with other qualifications.

### **4.5 Qualification Levels**

- a) All qualifications registered on the TQF are assigned to a level by evaluating the learning outcomes against generic outcome level descriptors that describe process, learning demand and responsibility.
- b) The outcome level descriptors listed in Appendix 2 are statements describing the characteristics of the learning outcomes of each of the ten levels of the TQF<sup>6</sup>.
- c) Each assigned level should also be consistent with the corresponding generic qualification definition and qualification outcomes statement detailed in Appendix 1.
- d) 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.

### **4.6 Credit Values**

- a) Each qualification registered on the TQF is assigned a credit value for both the whole qualification and its component parts.
- b) 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.

---

<sup>6</sup> These are the same as or very similar to New Zealand's Register and National Qualifications Framework level descriptors (see [www.kiwiquals.govt.nz](http://www.kiwiquals.govt.nz)), and equivalent to the level descriptors proposed in May 2009 for the Australian Qualifications Framework (see [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au))

- c) One credit is equivalent to ten notional learning hours. Notional learning hours include:
  - Contact hours (direct teaching, laboratory practical classes and/or workshops)
  - Time spent on independent study and doing assignments
  - Time spent on supervised work placements (where appropriate)
  - Time spent on assessment.
- d) One year of fulltime learning is normally assigned a credit value of 120 (or 1,200 notional learning hours).
- e) The sum of the credit values for all the components that make up the qualification must be equal to or greater than the total credit value of the qualification.
- f) Credit values are expressed in whole numbers.

#### 4.7 Qualification Components

- a) The components of qualifications should be described in terms of learning outcomes<sup>7</sup>. This facilitates the determination of equivalencies with components of other qualifications, credit transfer (cross-crediting) between qualifications and components of qualifications, and the recognition of prior learning (RPL – see section 4.11 below). It also enables qualification components to be assigned a TQF level based on the relative level of their learning outcomes.
- b) The following should be specified in the qualification component descriptor or unit of competency:
  - 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.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.

---

<sup>7</sup>These components are often directly related to the courses, units or modules that make up the programme (“course of study”) that leads to the award of the qualification.

#### **4.8 Entry Requirements**

- a) Any necessary entry requirements or pre-requisite qualifications should be specified. Entry requirements should not unreasonably exclude individuals because of descent, gender, social origin, place of birth, family status, or special needs. They should be reasonable for the level and complexity of the qualification.
- b) Whenever possible, open entry and recognition of prior learning (see section 2.11 below) is encouraged, in order to provide access to learning opportunities.

#### **4.9 Learning Assumed to be in Place**

- a) This section should capture and reflect the “building blocks” of knowledge, skills and understanding which it is assumed the learners already have prior to entry, and which support the achievement of the qualification by the learner. It should help the learner understand what is required in order to be successful with the learning involved in studying towards the qualification.

#### **4.10 International Comparability of Qualifications**

- a) 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.
- b) 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 qualification frameworks, although they are good sources to begin with.
- c) It is particularly 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 other developing countries
  - Best practice in the field internationally.
- d) 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.
- e) An indication should be given of why particular countries and qualifications used were chosen for the comparison.
- f) 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.

#### **4.11 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

- a) There should be a clear statement concerning how the qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through Recognition of Prior Learning, however such learning was achieved<sup>8</sup>.
- b) The approach to RPL should reflect the objectives and principles of the TQF and must be in line with TNQAB Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning (a separate document).

#### **4.12 Learning Pathways**

- a) An indication should be given of the learning pathway of which the qualification is a part. The relationship with other qualifications in the learning pathway should be clear, including how the qualification articulates with others both vertically and horizontally. This should also include any specific arrangements that have been made for articulation with particular qualifications.

#### **4.13 Support for the Qualification**

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

#### **4.14 Layout, Formatting and Language of the Qualification Description**

- a) Qualification registration forms must be submitted in a text format compatible with the format, which will be used to capture the qualification on the TNQAB database e.g. plain text, Rich Text Format (RTF), HTML, Microsoft Word 2003 or below, or pdf.
- b) The qualification registration form must be submitted both in hard copy and in an electronic format easily captured by TNQAB, but not in zipped file format.
- c) The language used to describe the qualification should be:
  - simple and accessible to the learner for whom it is intended;
  - appropriate to the level at which it is to be registered on the TQF; and
  - precise and consistent with normal usage in the sector.

#### **4.15 Notes**

- a) Any information that is regarded as vital for a complete understanding of the qualification and which is not included elsewhere in the qualification description may be included as notes. This must not include curriculum or subject matter content. This section should be used circumspectly and notes to a qualification description would be the exception rather than the rule.

### **5. QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW**

- a) A review of each of the qualifications registered on the TQF must be undertaken periodically to ensure that they are still fit for purpose and that the outcomes are still

---

<sup>8</sup> Through formal learning, non-formal learning, informal learning or work experience

appropriate and consistent with other similar qualifications. Registrations of national qualifications will normally be reviewed every five years, but TNQAB may instigate an earlier review if warranted.

- b) Provider qualifications will be reviewed by TNQAB as part of programme accreditation and/or the quality audit<sup>9</sup>.
- c) If a developer or provider wishes to change the title, level, outcome statement, credit value, entry requirements or any component of a qualification registered on the TQF, approval must be sought from TNQAB as soon as practicable. The changes should not be implemented until they have approved by TNQAB.

## **6. DEREGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- a) 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:
  - i. setting out the grounds for its decision/action;
  - ii. stating a reasonable and defined period (normally two to four weeks) within which to make submission on the matter;
  - iii. considering any written submissions and may give a further defined period of time to address the specified issues;
  - iv. making a decision after that period of time; and
  - v. sending a final written notice, specifying the details and the effective date of its decision.
- b) TNQAB may take the above action as a result of an investigation, external quality audit or review<sup>10</sup>.

## **7. REGAINING REGISTERED STATUS FOR A QUALIFICATION**

- a) A provider whose qualification has been deregistered from the TQF as a result of an investigation, external audit or review will need to re-apply to the TNQAB for reinstatement of that status.

## **8. COMPLIANCE NOTICES**

- a) 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.
- b) Every compliance notice will be in writing (a formal letter from TNQAB) and must:
  - give the date on which is it issued;
  - specify a time on or before which, or a period within which, the provider must comply with the notice; and
  - state the consequences or possible consequences of non-compliance with the notice.

---

<sup>9</sup>See TNQAB's "Guidelines for Programme Accreditation; and "Guidelines for Quality Audit"

<sup>10</sup>See TNQAB's "Guidelines for Quality Audit"

- c) A provider that receives a compliance notice must comply with it within the time period specified, which will normally be between ten and twenty working days from the date of issue.
- d) 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.
- e) TNQAB may extend the period of time for a provider to rectify compliance.
- f) 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.

## **9. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

- a) National qualifications are those developed to meet a specific priority national need or interest. Their development involves, and has widespread endorsement by, the appropriate national industry, profession or community<sup>11</sup>. The Industry Training Advisory Council (ITAC) or Sector Working Group (SWG)<sup>12</sup> involved in the qualification development process must be appropriately representative for the resulting qualification to be termed a national qualification.
- b) National qualifications are competency-based or outcomes-based qualifications that specify the skills, knowledge and attitudes applied to jobs and activities, and include the terms “Tonga”, “Tongan” or “National” in their titles. Education and training providers who wish to offer programmes of learning leading to national qualifications must first gain accreditation<sup>13</sup> from TNQAB.

---

<sup>11</sup>See TNQAB’s “Guidelines for the Development of National Qualifications”

<sup>12</sup> These are representative groups of stakeholders who assist in the process of developing national qualifications.

<sup>13</sup>See TNQAB’s “Guidelines for Programme Accreditation”

## APPENDIX 1: QUALIFICATION DEFINITIONS

Agreed definitions of the titles of qualifications support:

- the comparability of qualifications
- the easy understanding of qualifications; and
- international recognition of qualifications.

Each TQF qualification title will be defined by the characteristics listed below:

### 1.1 Certificates (Levels 1 to 4)

Certificates are used in a wide range of contexts, often to prepare people for both employment and further education and training.

Certificates at levels 1, 2 and 3 can be benchmarked against current school qualifications, including Tonga School Certificate (level 1), Pacific Secondary Certificate (level 2) and South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (level 3).

Certificates must have a minimum credit value of 40 (equivalent to one third of a year of full-time learning). The level of a certificate is determined by beginning with the highest-level credits and counting back until a total of 40 credits is reached. The level at which the total of 40 is reached determines the level of the certificate.

*Examples:*

	<b>Certificate A</b>	<b>Certificate B</b>	<b>Certificate C</b>	<b>Certificate D</b>
Credits at Level 1	30	20	0	0
Credits at Level 2	10	80	120	0
Credits at Level 3	0	20	100	20
Credits at Level 4	0	0	20	40
Credits at Level 5	0	0	0	20
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Level of Certificate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

### 1.2 Diplomas (Levels 5 and 6)

Diplomas often prepare learners for self-directed application of skills and knowledge. These qualifications often build on prior qualifications or prior experience and recognise capacity for initiative and judgement across a broad range of educational and vocational areas in technical, professional, and/or management roles.

Diplomas often have an entry requirement of the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate, or a Certificate Level 3 or 4 qualification, or equivalent, and/or work and life experience.

A diploma must have at least 120 credits (equivalent to one year of full time learning) contributing to the qualification at level 4 or above, with a minimum of 80 credits at level 5 or above.

An advanced diploma must have at least 120 credits contributing to the qualification at level 5 or above, with a minimum of 80 credits at level 6 or above.

**Examples:**

	<b>Diploma A</b>	<b>Diploma B</b>	<b>Advanced Diploma C</b>
Credits at Level 4	40	20	0
Credits at Level 5	80	120	20
Credits at Level 6	0	40	100
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Level of Diploma</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

### 1.3 Bachelor Degrees

A Bachelor degree is a systematic, coherent introduction to the knowledge, ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods, and analytical and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject or subjects. It requires meeting specified requirements, as set down in the relevant degree regulations, and involves at least one sequential study programme in which content is progressively developed to the point where a candidate is prepared for postgraduate study and supervised research. It prepares a candidate for advanced study as well as directed research and scholarship in the major subject(s) of the degree.

Bachelor degree programmes are taught mainly by people engaged in research, and emphasise general principles and basic knowledge as the basis for self-directed work and learning.

A Bachelor degree builds on prior study, work or other experience and is open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements.

**Outcomes:**

A graduate of a Bachelor degree programme is able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject (or subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major);
- demonstrate the skills needed to acquire, understand and assess information from a range of sources;
- demonstrate intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytic rigour;
- engage in self-directed learning; and
- demonstrate communication and collaborative skills.

**Credit Requirements:**

A Bachelor degree requires a minimum of 360 credits (equivalent to 3 years of full time learning) from levels 4 to 7. Some Bachelors degrees, notably in professional fields such as engineering, the

health sciences and law, encompass additional credits and may require a longer period of study. For example, an eight semester (four year) degree would normally be equivalent to 480 credits.

Of the credits required for a Bachelors degree, a minimum of 80 credits should be at level 7 and a minimum of 200 at level 6 and above. A maximum of 20 credits should be at level 4 (such that the integrity of the qualification at the higher levels is maintained).

The degree should specify a spread of credit across levels so that the qualification reflects the requirements of the degree definition and achieves the associated learning outcomes in a way that is appropriate to the subject area.

#### ***Relationship with other qualifications:***

A person who holds a Bachelors degree may be permitted to enrol for the Postgraduate Diploma or the Masters degree.

### **1.4 Graduate Certificates**

A graduate certificate is designed primarily as a vehicle for graduates to pursue further study at an undergraduate level. The graduate certificate can be designed as a bridging programme for candidates developing educational, professional or vocational knowledge in a new discipline, professional or subject area and/or as a broadening or deepening of skills or knowledge already gained in an undergraduate programme.

Entry is usually open to degree graduates or to those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind.

A person with a graduate certificate is able to:

- acquire and possess knowledge, analyse and solve problems, work and study independently; and
- demonstrate intellectual independence, analytical rigour and sound communication skills.

The graduate certificate is registered at level 7, requires at least 60 credits from levels 5 to 7, and has minimum of 40 credits at level 7.

The graduate certificate may provide an entry point to postgraduate study.

### **1.5 Graduate Diplomas**

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

Entry is usually open to graduates or to those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind.

A person with a graduate diploma is able to:

- engage in self-directed learning and advanced study; and

- demonstrate intellectual independence, analytic rigour, and the ability to understand and evaluate new knowledge and ideas.

A graduate diploma is registered at level 7 and requires a minimum of 80 credits at level 7; and requires a minimum of 120 credits from levels 5 or above.

A graduate diploma may provide the basis for postgraduate study.

## **1.6 Postgraduate Qualifications<sup>14</sup>**

Postgraduate qualifications build on prior study at Bachelor degree level or above, and/or on work or other experience, and are open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements. They include the following qualifications:

- Bachelors Degree with Honours (level 8)
- Postgraduate Certificate (Level 8)
- Postgraduate Diploma (Level 8)
- Masters Degree (Level 9)
- Doctoral Degrees (Level 10)

Postgraduate qualifications should be benchmarked against similar qualifications offered at New Zealand, Australian and/or other Commonwealth universities.

The other characteristics of postgraduate qualifications should be defined by the institutions that offer such qualifications.

---

<sup>14</sup>For more detailed definitions of postgraduate qualifications refer, for example, to *The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications* (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, October 2007)

## APPENDIX 2: TQF OUTCOME LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Level	Process	Learning Demand	Responsibility
1	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are limited in range</li> <li>- are repetitive and familiar</li> <li>- are employed within closely defined contexts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recall</li> <li>- a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills</li> <li>- no generation of new ideas</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in directed activity</li> <li>- under close supervision</li> <li>- with no responsibility for the work or learning of others</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require a moderate range of practical skills</li> <li>- are established and familiar</li> <li>- offer a clear choice of routine responses</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- basic operational knowledge</li> <li>- readily available information</li> <li>- known solutions to familiar problems</li> <li>- little generation of new ideas</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in directed activity</li> <li>- under general supervision and quality control</li> <li>- with some responsibility for quantity and quality</li> <li>- with possible responsibility for guiding others</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require a range of well developed skills</li> <li>- offer a significant choice of procedures</li> <li>- are employed within a range of familiar contexts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- some relevant low level theoretical knowledge</li> <li>- interpretation of available information</li> <li>- some discretion and judgment</li> <li>- a range of known responses to familiar problems</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in directed activity with some autonomy</li> <li>- under general supervision and quality checking</li> <li>- with significant responsibility for the quantity and quality of output</li> <li>- with possible responsibility for the output of others</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require a wide range of technical or scholastic skills</li> <li>- offer a considerable choice of procedures</li> <li>- are employed in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts</li> <li>- analytical interpretation of information</li> <li>- informed judgement</li> <li>- a range of sometimes innovative responses to concrete but often unfamiliar problems</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in self-directed activity</li> <li>- under broad guidance and evaluation</li> <li>- with complete responsibility for quantity and quality of output</li> <li>- with possible responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require a wide range of specialised technical or scholastic skills</li> <li>- involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures</li> <li>- are employed in a variety of routine and non-routine contexts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a broad knowledge base with substantial depth in some areas</li> <li>- analytical interpretation of a wide range of data</li> <li>- the determination of appropriate methods and procedures in response to a range of concrete problems with some theoretical elements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in self-directed and sometimes directive activity within broad general guidelines or functions</li> <li>- with full responsibility for the nature, quantity and quality of outcomes</li> <li>- with possible responsibility for the achievement of group outcome.</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require a command of wide-ranging highly specialised technical or scholastic skills</li> <li>- involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures, often in non-standard combinations</li> <li>- are employed in highly variable routine and non-routine contexts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- specialised knowledge with depth in more than one area</li> <li>- the analysis, reformatting and evaluation of a wide range of information</li> <li>- the formulation of appropriate responses to resolve both concrete and abstract problems</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in managing processes</li> <li>- within broad parameters for defined activities</li> <li>- with complete accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes</li> </ul>

Level	Process	Learning Demand	Responsibility
7	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require a command of highly specialised technical or scholastic and basic research skills across a major discipline</li> <li>- require research skills and critical evaluation of different problem solving approaches</li> <li>- involve the full range of procedures in a major discipline</li> <li>- are applied in complex, variable and specialised contexts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Requiring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge of a major discipline with areas of specialisation in depth</li> <li>- knowledge of methods of inquiry</li> <li>- the analysis, transformation and evaluation of abstract data and concepts</li> <li>- the creation of appropriate responses to resolve given or contextual abstract problems</li> <li>- application of established principles in different contexts, exercise initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in planning, resourcing and managing processes</li> <li>- within broad parameters and functions</li> <li>- with complete accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and/or group outcomes</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require broad knowledge that encourages innovation and provision of systematic, coherent account of the key principles of the subject area and abstract thinking</li> </ul>	<p><b>Requiring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- skills to undertake self-directed study, research and scholarship in a subject area.</li> <li>- Intellectual independence, analytic, rigour and sound communication</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to a wide variety of contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs</li> </ul>
9	<p><b>Carry out processes that;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require knowledge and understanding which is in the forefront of a field of learning</li> </ul>	<p><b>Requiring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ability to integrate, handle complex situations and formulate judgements</li> <li>- mastery of a complex and specialised subject area</li> <li>- skills to plan and carry out - to internationally recognised standards – an original scholarship or research project</li> <li>- the completion of a substantial research paper, dissertation or in some cases a series of papers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in new and unfamiliar contexts related to the field of study\</li> <li>- well developed skills to lead complex, multiple and heterogeneous groups</li> <li>- take responsibility for own continuing academic/professional development</li> </ul>
10	<p><b>Carry out processes that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- involve knowledge and skills that enable the learner to provide an original contribution to knowledge through research or scholarship, as judged by independent experts applying international standards.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Requiring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- specialist and transferable skills for managing complex and unpredictable situations;</li> <li>- ability to critique other’s work</li> <li>- ability to initiate change</li> </ul>	<p><b>Applied:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in the discovery and development of new knowledge and skills</li> <li>- communication of results of research and innovation</li> <li>- engagement in critical dialogue.</li> </ul>

### APPENDIX 3: CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS ON THE TQF

#### ***i. Qualification Purpose Statement***

There is clear purpose stated for the qualification.
The purpose is related to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.
The purpose supports the priorities established in the Statement for the Strategic Development Plan Eight (SDP8) of the Government of Tonga

#### ***ii. Qualification Title***

The title is indicative of the purpose and outcomes of the qualification
The title indicates the qualification type (certificate, diploma, etc) and field or sub-field
The title indicates the qualification level
The title is appropriate and complies with qualification definitions

#### ***iii. Rationale for Qualification***

The rationale shows how the qualification meets specific needs in the sector for which it was developed
The range of typical learners is identified and is appropriate
Evidence is available of the societal and economic benefits of the qualification

#### ***iv. Qualification Outcomes Statement***

Outcomes are clearly stated
Outcomes for the whole qualification are reasonable and reflect the stated purpose
Outcomes for qualification components are logical

#### ***v. Qualification Level***

The level is consistent with the qualification definitions
The level is consistent with the outcome level descriptors
The level is consistent with the qualification outcome statement

#### ***vi. Credit Value of the Qualification***

The total number of credits is shown
The total credit value of the qualification equals the sum of the credits assigned to the components
The credit total is appropriate and conforms to qualification definitions

### **vii. *Qualification Components***

For each component descriptor, the purpose, title, credit value, level, learning outcomes and/or defined competencies are clearly stated

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

The components reflect the purpose, title and level of the qualification

The qualification structure is reasonable and shows an appropriate balance between compulsory and elective components, theoretical and practical requirements

### **viii. *Entry Requirements***

Any entry requirements or pre-requisite qualifications are stated

Entry requirements do not unreasonably exclude individuals because of descent, gender, social origin, place of birth, family status, or special needs

Entry requirements are reasonable for the level of the qualification

### **ix. *Learning Assumed to be in Place***

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***

There is a clear and appropriate statement of how the qualification compares with similar qualifications offered internationally

### **xi. *Recognition of Prior Learning***

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***

There is a clear and appropriate statement of where the qualification fits into one or more learning pathways

### **xiii. *Support for Qualification***

Evidence is provided to show support for the qualification by relevant, national and, where appropriate, international, industry, professional, academic, community or other interest groups

The evidence of support is sufficient

## APPENDIX 4: LEARNING FIELDS OF QUALIFICATIONS AND THEIR COMPONENTS

The TQF is made up of qualifications that have meaningful learning outcomes. The breadth of outcomes that can be recognized in the Framework is immense. In order for people to find their way around 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 learning 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.

Fields	Scope of Coverage (Sub-Fields) <sup>15</sup>
1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Agriculture</b></li><li>- Animal Care and Handling</li><li>- Equine</li><li>- Forestry</li><li>- Horticulture</li><li>- Pest Management</li><li>- Pork Production</li><li>- Poultry Production</li><li>- Rural Contracting</li><li>- Seafood</li><li>- Wood Harvesting</li><li>- Nature Conservation</li><li>- Forestry and Wood Technology</li><li>- Livestock</li><li>- Fisheries and Wildlife</li></ul>
2. Business and Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Accounting</b></li><li>- <b>Finance</b></li><li>- <b>Business Administration</b></li><li>- <b>International Business</b></li><li>- Economics and Accounting</li><li>- Management and Human Resources</li><li>- Purchasing and Procurement</li><li>- Administration</li><li>- Public Relations Marketing</li><li>- Information Management</li><li>- Not For Profit Systems and Structures</li><li>- Office Systems</li><li>- Public Sector Services</li><li>- Insurance and Banking</li></ul>

<sup>15</sup> The sub-fields of learning in bold font are those where qualifications are currently available in Tonga

### 3. Culture, Arts and Crafts

- ***Fine Arts and Design***
- ***Design Studies***
- ***Multi-media***
- Visual Arts and Photography
- Performing Arts
- Cultural Studies
- Recreation
- Music
- Sport
- Electronic media
- Drama
- Dance
- Television and Video

### 4. Education

- ***Teaching***
- ***General Education***
- ***Early Childhood***
- ***Teaching and Learning***
- Adult Education and Training
- Adult Literacy Education
- Educational Administration
- Generic Education and Training
- Pacific Islands Early Childhood Education
- Special Education
- Teacher Education
- Teacher Aids
- Workshop Assistants
- Lab Assistants
- Day Care Centre
- Adult Learning Tutoring

### 5. Engineering and Manufacturing

- ***Automotive and Mechanical Fitters***
- ***General Engineering***
- ***Carpentry and Joinery***
- ***Electrical Engineering***
- ***Panel Beating and Spray Fitting***
- ***Refrigeration and Air Conditioning***
- Blaster coating
- Civil Works and Services
- Design
- Electricity Supply
- Electronic Technology
- Highway Construction and Maintenance
- Industrial Measurement and Control

- Mechanical Engineering
  - Motor Industry
  - Pavement Surfacing
  - Textile
6. Health
- *Nursing*
  - *Midwifery*
  - *Dental Support*
  - *Occupational and Safety*
  - Curative Health and Rehabilitative Health
  - Emergency Services
  - Health Studies
  - Mental Health
  - Natural and Traditional Health and Healing
  - Occupational Health and Safety
  - Pharmacy
  - Preventive Health
  - Promotive Health, and Developmental Services
  - Public Health
7. Law and Security
- *Criminal Investigation*
  - *Harms against the person*
  - *Police*
  - *Property Crime and Procedures*
  - *Safety in Society*
  - Biosecurity
  - Compliance and Law Enforcement
  - Justice in Society and Sovereignty of the State
  - Offender Management
  - Security
  - Justice in Society and Sovereignty of the State
8. Information & Communication Technology
- *Computing*
  - *Information Technology*
  - Communication Technology
  - Computer Human Interactions
  - Computing Systems Support
  - Information Security
9. Social Services/ Service Sector
- *Civil Defence*
  - *Diving*
  - *Hospitality*
  - *Maritime*
  - *Secretarial Studies*
  - *Tourism*

- *Tourism Management*
- *Youth Development*
- Travel
- Transport
- Operations and Logistics
- Personal Care
- Wholesale and Retail
- Consumer Services and Utilities

## 10. Planning and Construction

- *Architecture*
- *Building Construction*
- *Construction*
- Construction Trade
- Masonry
- Painting and Decorating
- Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying
- Quantity Surveying
- Surveying
- Design and Management
- Civil Engineering Construction and Electrical Infrastructure Construction

## 11. Generic Skills

- *Core Generic*
- *Communication*
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Team Skills
- Entrepreneurship
- Self Management and Work Ready

## 12. Humanities

- *Bible Studies*
- *Divinity*
- *Ministerial Formation*
- *Lay Preaching*
- *Theological Studies*
- Christian Ministries
- Christian Studies
- Christian Theology
- Communication Skills
- English
- Health and Physical Education
- Languages
- Pacific Studies
- Religious Studies

### 13. Sciences

- Sports Education
- *Mathematics*
- *Science*
- Environment
- Home and Life Sciences
- Statistics and Probability

Names of fields and sub-fields of learning cannot be changed unless agreed to by the Board. 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. Their naming has an obvious relationship with the Sub-field.

For example, when naming qualifications in the Sub-field of Tourism, the following titles may be used as “qualifiers” in the titles of the qualifications<sup>16</sup>:

- Whale Watching Guiding
- Visitor Information Services
- Adventure Tourism
- Etc

---

<sup>16</sup> These are sometimes referred to as “domains” of learning

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The document is adapted, with permission from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.