

**TONGA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

**AND**

**ACCREDITATION BOARD**



**TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

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# TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A major development challenge confronting the Kingdom of Tonga has been identified in the Strategic Development Plan Eight (SDP8) as the need for greater income-earning and employment opportunities in order to reduce hardship. Hardship in the Tongan context is defined as:

*An inadequate level of sustainable human development, manifested by a lack of access to basic services; a lack of opportunities to participate fully in the socio-economic life of the community; and a lack of adequate resources (including cash) to meet the basic needs of the household or customary obligations to the extended family, village community and/or the church.*

In response to this challenge the Government has adopted a vision that expresses the aims of all development activities that will be undertaken during the SDP8 period. The Vision is:

*To create a society in which all Tongans enjoy higher living standards and a better quality of life through good governance, equitable and environmentally sustainable private sector-led economic growth, improved education and health standards, and cultural development.*

In its efforts to realise the national Vision, the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture (MEWAC) highlighted its concern over issues of equity of access to, and quality of the education being provided, as well as the readiness of school graduates for employment in a market economy by developing an "Education Policy Framework 2004-2019" that was approved by Cabinet in May 2004. One of the key objectives of the framework is "To improve the access to and quality of post-basic education and training to cater for the different abilities and needs of students". The following strategies are being utilised by MEWAC to achieve this objective:

- Continue to undertake an annual training needs assessment;
- Develop the Tonga National Qualifications Framework;
- Develop pilot skill-development projects;
- Expand opportunities for on-the-job training schemes.

The development of the Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF) becomes a significant step in the direction of alleviating hardship, thus enabling Tonga to realise her Vision.

## 2. BACKGROUND

As far back and the mid-eighties, Tonga recognised the need to reform education and training in the kingdom to create a modern education system that would encourage lifelong learning, increase skill levels in the labour force as well as providing a tool to address employment challenges faced by the country. While various alternative post-compulsory education training programmes are available, they generally do not lead to qualifications that are recognised by potential employers or carry

international currency. The qualifications framework is generally regarded as a means of creating an integrated national framework for learning, of helping to link qualifications with industry and other users of qualifications, and of supporting efforts for more consistent standards, as well as gaining a greater equivalence and recognition of qualifications.

In 1987, Cabinet approved the establishment of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB). The resulting Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Bill was drafted in 1998, approved by Parliament in mid 2004 and enacted by Privy Council on 12 December 2007. The Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board Regulations were first drafted in 1999, reviewed in 2006 and presented to Cabinet in 2007.

The Board's national qualifications functions are set out in the following subsections of Part II (8) of the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Act 2004:

- (a) Develop a national qualifications framework for post compulsory education, training, review and revise corporate plans; and*
- (b) Establish policies, criteria, accreditation, monitoring, reviewing, register, and listing of providers of post compulsory education and training*

It is intended that the TNQAB will have oversight of qualifications for post compulsory education in Tonga, including those awarded by the MEWAC, MOTEYS<sup>1</sup>, other Ministries and non-Government education providers from the Year 8 onwards. The TNQAB will review all current qualifications, including school examinations, and position them on a graded framework of qualifications which will inform learners, education providers, employers and others regarding the status and standard of awards provided. The TNQAB will pay particular attention to the diversity of skills which are learned at the post compulsory stage of educational provision.

There are a growing number of education providers in Tonga in all sectors of education and the GoT aims to ensure that quality of education provision is transparent and reliable. Thus it is necessary to establish benchmarks of achievement and equivalency which will add clarity for all concerned. The TNQAB will set standards for qualifications, and provide quality assurance services by registering providers, accrediting programmes, and conducting audits and reviews. By establishing a framework of qualifications it will help ensure that there are clear pathways for learners to continuously develop their skills in an era of lifelong learning.

Employer and industry involvement in the development of formal education and training awards is an integral component of the model to be developed. It is intended that industry sector group committees will be established to assist the TNQAB ensure that qualifications meet the needs and standards required by the private sector.

### **3. THE RATIONALE**

In Tonga now there are many providers offering a diverse range of programmes leading to qualifications at certificate, diploma and degree levels. Some of these qualifications are offered by

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Training, Employment, Youth, & Sports (MoTEYS), was set up in 2006 with a mandate to focus on the development of short-term training and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Tonga.

foreign institutions and/or examination bodies while others are offered by local institutions. Consequently, there is little or no comparability, articulation, or linkage between and among courses and qualifications offered by these various bodies/institutions. The development of the Tonga Qualifications Framework, therefore, arises from a number of reasons, among which are the following:

- To address the challenges and realize the national aims and objectives set out in the National Strategic Development Plans.
- The concern that the different worlds of learning (School, Higher Education and TVET) are providing the country with inadequate return on investment in supporting the national development goals.
- The concern that school leavers do not have relevant skills suitable for the sustainable growth of the industrial sector.
- There is little coherence or portability between the three worlds of education and training. This is reflected on the lack of strategies for movement of learners from;
  - School into the world of work and/or TVET;
  - School into higher education; and
  - TVET into higher education.
- Much TVET training takes place on the job without any quality check or recognition. The subsequent non-recognition of skills disadvantages employed and hinders learners' progress into further learning.
- The emergence of national qualifications frameworks in neighbouring states and the global mobility of skilled labour necessitating comparability.
- In the absence of a national framework of qualifications it becomes difficult to introduce any quality assurance and control measures. This situation makes it difficult to ascertain whether different qualifications with the same or similar names are in fact equivalent.

## **4. USE OF TERMS FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

### **4.1 Current use of terms**

To determine the current use of qualification terms in Tonga, eighteen<sup>2</sup> post compulsory education and training (PCET) providers were recently visited. A few of these provided written information about their education and training provision, others provided verbal replies to targeted questions.

This study<sup>2</sup> found that the terms “Certificate” and “Diploma” are currently used in the titles of a wide variety of qualifications. Each qualification title was characterized by input criteria including length, entry requirements and, in most cases, prescribed content. A few qualifications were characterized by outcome statements that indicate the level of knowledge and skills of a graduate who has been awarded the qualification.

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<sup>2</sup> See TNQAB's “Review of Qualification Titles and Their Characteristics”

The term “Certificate” was found to be used for qualifications with various entry requirements including none (open entry), Tonga School Certificate (TSC), Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC), SPBEA’s South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) and USP’s Foundation Certificate. The length of time required to obtain a formal “Certificate” was found most often to be 1 year. However, the range was from a week (for example, TIST’s Advanced Medical First Aid Certificate), to 2 to 3 years of full-time study (for example, Hango’s Certificate in Agriculture).

The term “Diploma” was found to be used in the following ways:

- For 2 to 3 year full-time qualifications with entry requirements of PSSC or equivalent (for example, Tupou’s New Zealand Diploma in Business and Sia’toutai Theological College’s Diploma in Divinity);
- For 1 to 3 year qualifications with an entry requirement one level higher than PSSC (for example: USP requires a Foundation Certificate, the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate or equivalent for entry into its diploma courses; Queen Salote’s Diploma in Nursing requires the SPFSC for entry).

The terms “Associate” and “Associate Degree” are used by ‘Atenisi and ‘Unuaki o Tonga respectively for Diploma equivalent 2 year full-time qualifications.

#### **4.2 Use of terms in the Tonga Qualifications Framework**

The TNQAB Act 2004 defines the term “qualification” as “a certificate, diploma or degree gained as a result of satisfying conditions and requirements set by an examining authority or accredited provider and showing hours attributed to the course and the levels of competency gained”.

Internationally, qualification types that are part of qualifications frameworks are described in a variety of ways. However, in recent years a consensus has emerged that focuses on defining qualifications primarily in terms of their learning outcomes and only secondarily in terms of the traditional input definitions (entry level, content and length). This enables qualifications to be placed within frameworks on the basis of an evaluation of their exit level relative to other qualifications. The TNQAB Act definition includes both inputs (“number of hours”) and outcomes (“levels of competency gained”).

### **5. TONGA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW**

The Tonga Qualifications Framework is a way of structuring existing and new nationally recognised qualifications, which are defined in terms of outcomes and levels. It indicates the interrelationships of the qualifications and how one can progress from one to another. The Tonga Qualifications Framework is, therefore, a mechanism through which the country can bring education and training together into a single unified system.

The Tonga Qualifications Framework:

- Provides a structure for establishing national equivalence and comparability of qualifications;
- Facilitates international comparability of qualifications awarded in Tonga;
- Facilitates understanding of the skills, processes and competencies graduates have achieved through clear outcome level descriptors;

- Facilitates the matching of skills demanded by industry to the supply of skilled workers;
- Provides opportunities for career development and clear and flexible pathways;
- Facilitates the recognition of prior learning and current competencies;
- Provides opportunities to facilitate the pursuit of lifelong learning;
- Facilitates the development of a register of quality assured qualifications.

The TQF is supported by the following processes:

- Registration of providers;
- Registration of qualifications;
- Accreditation of education and training programmes;
- Quality audit and review of education and training providers;
- Development of national qualifications
- Moderation of assessments leading to the award of national qualifications;
- Review of registered qualifications.

The following components of the TQF are discussed in more detail below:

- Titles and Levels
- Outcome Statements
- National credit system
- Qualification Components
- Subject Classification

## 5.1 Qualification Titles and Levels

The review of the types of qualifications currently offered in Tonga, and the terms used to identify them<sup>3</sup> revealed that the generic terms “Certificate” and “Diploma” are being used in a wide variety of ways. However, an analysis of the lengths and entry requirements of these qualifications indicated that there are about four levels of certificate and at least two levels of diplomas currently offered by post compulsory education and training providers. The situation with regard to bachelors degrees and postgraduate qualifications is clearer because of benchmarking, at least to a limited extent, to overseas qualifications. Also, most of the qualification frameworks developed by countries that have a close link with Tonga have nine or ten levels.

The assignment of levels to qualifications and their components based on the characteristics of their learning outcomes is important for equivalency purposes. Levels can be assigned by evaluating the learning outcomes against standard outcome level descriptors that describe process, learning demand and responsibility. See appendix A for TQF level descriptors<sup>4</sup>.

The Tonga Qualifications Framework has ten (10) levels and is comprised of qualifications that are registered in accordance with definitions detailed in Section 6 and that meet the registration criteria listed in Section 7. A qualification must be registered at one of ten levels depending on the complexity of the skills and knowledge that are being recognised. Level 1 is the least complex and

<sup>3</sup> See Section 4.1 above and TNQAB’s “Review of Qualification Titles and Their Characteristics”

<sup>4</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))

Level 10 is the most complex. These levels do not equate to years spent learning, but reflect the outcomes of the qualification. Of the ten levels, there are four certificate levels, two diploma levels, one bachelors degree level and three postgraduate levels.

Most of the qualifications currently offered within Tonga can be readily fitted into the Framework<sup>5</sup>. The level where each qualification fits will be determined through the accreditation process and the number of credits that are at or above a particular level at which the qualification is registered.

***Tonga Qualifications Framework:***

<b>Level</b>	<b>Qualification Title</b>	<b>School Qualifications</b>
10	Doctoral Degree	
9	Masters Degree	
8	Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate, Bachelor Degree with Honours	
7	Bachelor Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	
6	Advanced Diploma	
5	Diploma	
4	Certificate Level 4	
3	Certificate Level 3	SPFSC - South Pacific Form Seven Certificate/ CIE
2	Certificate Level 2	PSSC - Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate
1	Certificate Level 1	TSC - Tonga School Certificate

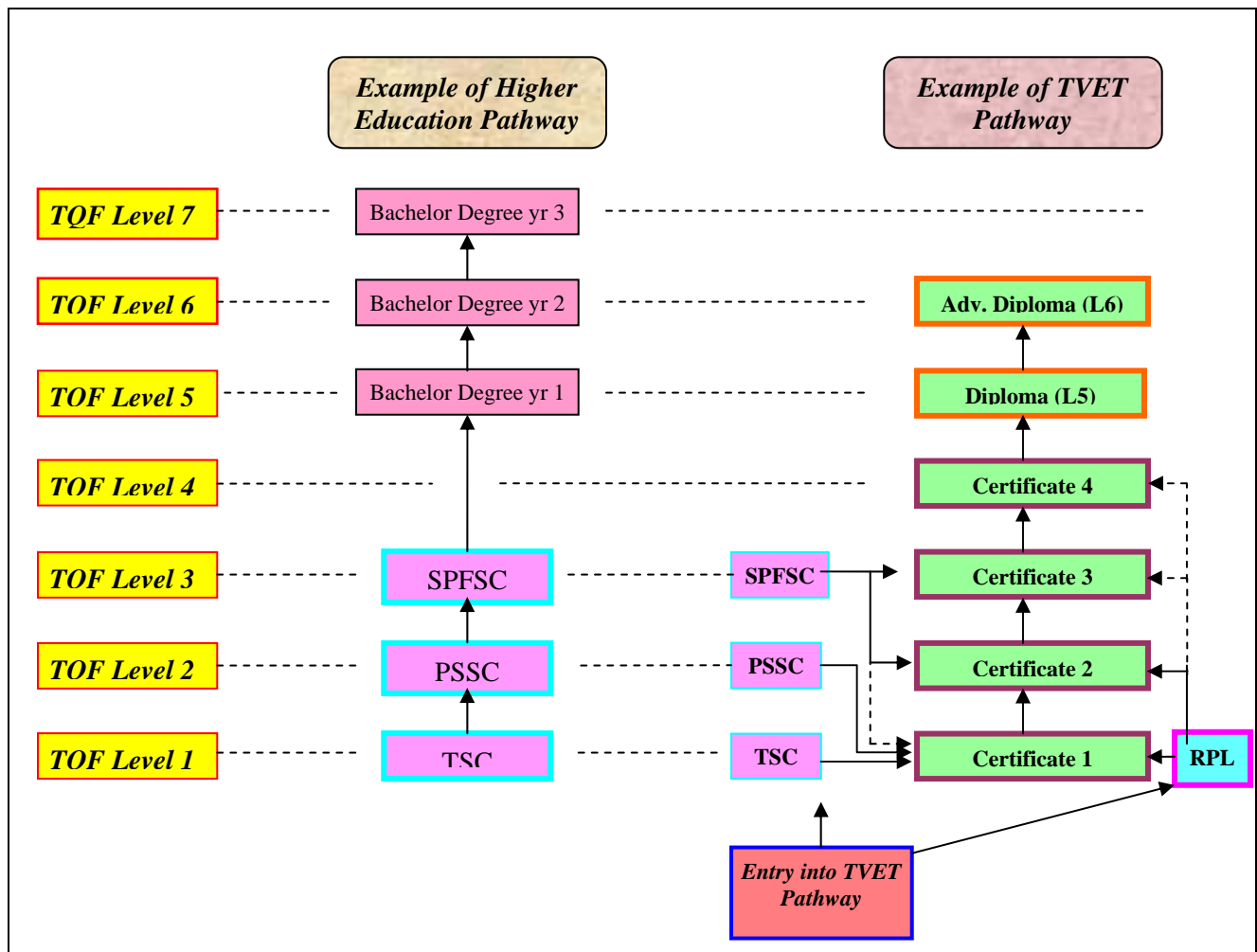
In the above diagram the levels of Tonga’s school qualifications in relation to the levels of the proposed TQF are indicated. However, a student with PSSC in traditional school subjects, such as

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix B for the possible TQF levels of selected qualifications currently available in Tonga



Mathematics, English and Science, (benchmarked in the TQF at Level 2) may have to enter at Certificate Level 1 if he or she wishes to complete, for example, a trade certificate in automotive engineering. This would be the case if the student has no prior skills, knowledge or experience in automotive engineering. There will be provision for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for those with un-certificated or informal learning (for example learning achieved on-the-job, through working in the community or through attendance at short un-certificated courses).

Examples of higher education and technical vocational education and training (TVET) pathways are shown in the following pathways diagram:



### ***Title Naming Sequence***

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 (Business, Building, Engineering, etc) and its level (for certificates and diplomas). Qualifiers may be included in brackets after the qualification field, if required. Examples are listed in the following table:

Developer	Qualification Type	Field	Qualifier	TQF Level
Institute A	Certificate	Computing	(Intermediate)	Level 3
National	Certificate	Building	(Carpentry)	Level 2
Polytechnic B	Advanced Diploma	Engineering	(Mechanical)	Level 6
University C	Bachelor	Arts	(Tourism Management)	

## 5.2 Qualification Outcome Statements

Qualification outcome statements should clearly indicate what the whole qualification represents in terms of the **knowledge, understanding, skills** and **attitudes** of graduates holding the qualification.

Outcomes statements provide clarity and focus for qualification development. They inform and guide the development of qualification components and processes for teaching, learning and assessment. A qualification outcome statement also gives students and prospective employers an idea of what the qualification holder will have achieved by the end of the qualification. It is not a statement of content, nor is it a list of the goals of a programme.

An outcome statement should:

- reflect the purpose of the qualification;
- reflect the level of the qualification, by linking to level descriptors and relevant qualification definitions;
- accurately and clearly describe expected learner achievement in terms of application of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes (graduate profile);
- be stated as specifically as possible;
- allow meaningful comparisons to be made with other qualifications.

### *Examples:*

- The outcome statement for the Bachelor of Applied Science at Auckland University of Technology is: *“Graduates are vocationally educated and will communicate effectively, (and) work autonomously and responsibly. They will approach issues logically and scientifically using specialist knowledge and critical appreciation of available resources.”*
- The outcome statement for the (New Zealand) National Certificate in Carpentry Level 4 includes: *“This qualification recognises the skills and knowledge required to work as a carpenter in the construction industry. People who gain the qualification will have a broad enough knowledge and skill base to work as a competent tradesperson whether they specialise in residential, industrial, commercial or multi-storey construction.”*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications - [www.kiwiquals.govt.nz](http://www.kiwiquals.govt.nz)

## 5.3 National Credit System

### *Equivalency*

Equivalency is important for people engaged, or wishing to engage, in post compulsory education and training. Equivalency refers to the process of assessing learning outcomes and assigning credit for education and training. This process is often referred to as “recognition of prior learning” or “assessment of current competency”<sup>7</sup>. Developing and implementing such a process helps:

- a) Provide access to formal post compulsory education and training courses of study for people with no or inadequate formal qualifications;
- b) The development of pathways for learners between individual post compulsory education and training providers both within Tonga and overseas, including between technical vocational education and training and higher education;
- c) People accumulate credits from all parts of post compulsory education and training, including formal providers, community and enterprise based courses, the private sector and the workplace.

### *Credit Values and Credit Requirements*

The assignment of credit values to qualifications and components of qualifications has been found useful by many post compulsory education and training institutions, both overseas and in Tonga. A credit is the average amount of learning and assessment time that would be required for a learner to gain a qualification or attain skills and knowledge associated with a qualification component and is measured in terms of “notional learning hours”. The total number of hours determines the credit value for a training standard, a course or a qualification. Notional hours are estimated in terms of how long it would take an average person to achieve the specified learning outcomes. Notional learning hours include direct contact time with trainers, time spent in study, doing assignments and assessment. This time is expressed in terms of credits where 1 credit is equivalent to 10 notional learning hours. A typical full-time single year of learning may, therefore, translate into 120 credits.

The use of credit values is particularly important when determining equivalencies between qualifications and components of qualifications for cross-credit and credit transfer purposes, for the recognition of prior learning and for the development of part-time and part-year full-time courses of study. The process is greatly facilitated if a common currency for the determination of credit has been agreed.

For existing qualifications, credit values may be stated in terms of the number of years (or proportion of a year) of full-time study normally required to complete the qualification. .

The following credit requirements will be applied:

- a) Every qualification registered on the Tonga Qualifications Framework has a credit value allocated to each of its component parts and to the whole qualification;
- b) In assigning credit values, a qualifications developer evaluate how long it would take an average learner to achieve the stated outcomes in the context, and at the level, specified;

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<sup>7</sup> See TNQAB’s “Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning”

- c) The amount of learning that is typically required in gaining a qualification be measured in terms of “total notional learning hours”, where one credit is the equivalent of ten notional learning hours;
- d) Notional learning hours include direct teaching, time in laboratories or workshops, time spent studying and doing assignments, time spent on supervised practical work placements and time spent on assessment (students on short courses and workers on the job can accumulate credits using the same formula - one credit is the equivalent of ten notional learning hours);
- e) One year of full time learning normally be given a credit value of 120 (*1,200 notional learning hours*) (for example: one semester of full time learning normally has a credit value of 60 (*600 notional learning hours*); three years of full-time learning, such as for a Bachelor degree, normally has a credit value of 360 (*3,600 notional learning hours*);
- f) The total of the credit values for all the qualification components equals the total credit value of the qualification;
- g) The assignment of credit values and levels to the qualification and its components is subject to approval by the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board.

#### 5.4 Subject Classification

The subject classification system in Appendix C will be used to classify areas or fields of learning qualification and its components.

*(Details will be included later when the inventory of training providers and qualifications is finalised)*

#### 5.5 Qualification Components

The components of qualifications should be described in terms of learning outcomes<sup>8</sup>. This facilitates the determination of equivalencies with components of other qualifications, credit transfer (cross-crediting) between qualifications and components of qualifications, and recognition of prior learning (RPL). It also enables qualification components to be assigned a TQF level based on the relative level of their learning outcomes.

The following information should be defined for each qualification component:

- Title
- Purpose
- Credit value
- TQF level
- Learning outcomes
- Pre-requisites and co-requisites, where appropriate
- Assessment methodology
- Moderation arrangements
- Requirements for successful completion

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<sup>8</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.

For some qualifications, all components are compulsory. Others qualifications 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. Elective qualification components may be required from a specified list, from a specified subject area, from any subject area, or from a combination of these, depending on the structure of the qualification.

## 6. 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:

### 6.1 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>

### 6.2 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>

### 6.3 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.

**6.4 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.

## 6.5 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.

## 6.6 Postgraduate Qualifications<sup>9</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.

## 6.7 Use of the Terms “Tonga”, “Tongan” and “National” in Qualification Titles

The use of the terms Tonga, Tongan and National in qualification titles is restricted so certificates and diplomas which have been developed nationally, and can only be used for this purpose.

Such qualifications cover the skills, knowledge and understanding required to meet nationally endorsed learning outcomes and standards and are available to education & training providers that meet TNQB accreditation criteria.

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<sup>9</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)



## 7. QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER

As more and more qualifications are quality assured (accredited) by the TNQAB, record-keeping will become increasingly important. Also, the demand from stakeholders<sup>10</sup> for easy access to basic information about qualifications will grow.

The TNQAB will establish a Register of quality assured qualifications where the information about each qualification is recorded and updated regularly.

### 7.1 Information to be Recorded on the Register

The following information about each quality assured qualification will be recorded on the Register, and made available to the public via the TNQAB website:

- Qualification title;
- Qualification level;
- Qualification outcome statement;
- The credit requirements of the qualification;
- A statement summarizing industry and community support for the qualification;
- Components making up the qualification, including the following information about each component:
  - Title
  - Purpose
  - Credit value
  - Learning outcomes
  - Pre-requisites and co-requisites, where appropriate
  - Assessment methodology
  - Moderation arrangements
  - Requirements for successful completion
- Entry requirements
- Qualification developer and provider details;
- Accreditation requirements, including for moderation (*for national qualifications only*)
- Issue and Review dates.

### 7.2 Qualification Registration Criteria

Qualifications will need to meet the following criteria prior to registration on the TQF:

- a) The qualification title and level are appropriate and comply with title and level definitions, and with protected terms
- b) The outcomes reflect the purpose and level of the qualification, and clearly describe expected learner achievement
- c) The qualification is supported by relevant national and, where appropriate international, industry, professional, academic, community or interest groups
- d) The credit value of the qualification is appropriate and conforms to qualification definitions

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<sup>10</sup> Including Government agencies, industry (employers and employees), community organisations, training providers and individual students and their parents

- e) The components of the qualification are defined and reflect the title, level and outcomes
- f) Entry requirements are inclusive and reasonable for the level and type of qualification

## **8. QUALIFICATION REVIEW**

Both national and provider qualifications registered on the TQF are subject to periodic reviews to ensure that they maintain relevance and that the outcomes are still appropriate and consistent with similar qualifications. For national qualifications, the normal period of TQF qualification registration is five years but TNQAB may initiate an earlier review if circumstances demand it. Provider qualifications will be reviewed by TNQAB as part of programme accreditation and/or the quality audit<sup>11</sup>.

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 been approved by TNQAB.

## **9. DEREGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

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:

- Setting out the grounds for its decision/action;
- Stating a reasonable and defined period (normally two to four weeks) within which to make submissions on the matter;
- Considering any written submissions and may give a further defined period of time to address the specified issues;
- Making a decision after that period of time; and
- Sending a final written notice, specifying the details and the effective date of its decision.

TNQAB may take the above action as a result of a special purpose audit or an external quality audit.

## **10. COMPLIANCE NOTICES**

TNQAB may issue a compliance notice to a Provider requiring the Provider to take, or refrain from taking, a particular action in relation to registration of any of its qualifications on the TQF. Every compliance notice will be in writing (a formal letter from TNQAB) and will:

- Give the date on which is it issued; and
- Specify a time on or before which, or a period within which, the Provider must comply with the notice; and

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<sup>11</sup> See TNQAB's "Guidelines for Programme Accreditation" and "Guidelines for Quality Audit"

- State the consequences or possible consequences of non-compliance with the notice.

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

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.

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.

## **11. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

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>12</sup>. The Sector Working Group<sup>13</sup> involved in the qualification development process must be appropriately representative for the resulting qualification to be termed a national qualification.

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” 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>14</sup> from TNQAB.

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<sup>12</sup> See TNQAB’s “Guidelines for the Development of National Qualifications”

<sup>13</sup> Sector Working Group: a representative group of stakeholders who assist in the process of development of national qualifications.

<sup>14</sup> See TNQAB’s “Guidelines for Programme Accreditation”

## APPENDIX A: TONGA QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK 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 moderate in 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 judgment</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</li> <li>- 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>
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</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</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>

Level	Process	Learning Demand	Responsibility
	<p>in a major discipline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are applied in complex, variable and specialised contexts</li> </ul>	<p>contextual abstract problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- application of established principles in different contexts, exercise initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities.</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 judgments</li> <li>- mastery of a complex and specialised subject area</li> <li>- skills to plan and carry out - to internationally recognised standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an original scholarship or research project</li> </ul> </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 B: POSSIBLE TQF LEVELS OF SELECTED QUALIFICATIONS

The following possible level assignments are based on the entry criteria and length of the selected qualifications. Final decisions will be made based on qualification outcome statements and qualification component learning outcomes as part of the TNQAB accreditation process.

### Certificates

- TIST Trade Certificate – *Level 2 or 3*
- Sia'atoutai Certificate in Theology and Pastoral Ministry – *Level 2*
- St Joseph's Certificate in Secretarial Studies – *Level 2 or 3*
- Montfort Certificate in Automotive Trade – *Level*

### Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas

- CDTC Diploma in Information Systems – *Level 5*
- Queen Salote Diploma in Nursing – *Level 6*
- TIOE Diploma in Education – *Level 6*
- 'Unuaki 'o Tonga Associate Degree in Accounting – *Level 5*

### Degrees and Postgraduate Qualifications

- TIOE Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning – *Level 7*
- Sia'atoutai Bachelor in Divinity with Honours – *Level 8*

### New Zealand Qualifications Delivered in Tonga

- NZ National Certificate in Catering and Hospitality Level 2 (Mailefihi College) – *equivalent to Level 2*
- NZ Diploma in Information Technology Level 5 (Tupou Tertiary Institute) – *equivalent to Level 5*

## APPENDIX C: SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND THEIR COMPONENTS

Fields	Scope of Coverage (Sub-Fields)
1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agriculture</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>● Accounting</li> <li>● Finance</li> <li>● Business Administration</li> <li>● International Business</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>
3. Culture, Arts and Crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fine Arts and Design</li> <li>● Design Studies</li> <li>● Multi-media</li> <li>● Visual Arts and Photography</li> <li>● Performing Arts</li> <li>● Cultural Studies</li> <li>● Recreation</li> <li>● Music</li> </ul>

Fields	Scope of Coverage (Sub-Fields)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sport</li> <li>● Electronic media</li> <li>● Drama</li> <li>● Dance</li> <li>● Television and Video</li> </ul>
4. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teaching</li> <li>● General Education</li> <li>● Early Childhood</li> <li>● Teaching and Learning</li> <li>● Adult Education and Training</li> <li>● Adult Literacy Education</li> <li>● Educational Administration</li> <li>● Generic Education and Training</li> <li>● Pacific Islands Early Childhood Education</li> <li>● Special Education</li> <li>● Teacher Education</li> <li>● Teacher Aids</li> <li>● Workshop Assistants</li> <li>● Lab Assistants</li> <li>● Day Care Centre</li> <li>● Adult Learning Tutoring</li> </ul>
5. Engineering and Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Automotive and Mechanical Fitters</li> <li>● General Engineering</li> <li>● Carpentry and Joinery</li> <li>● Electrical Engineering</li> <li>● Panel Beating and Spray Fitting</li> <li>● Refrigeration and Air Conditioning</li> <li>● Blaster coating</li> <li>● Civil Works and Services</li> <li>● Design</li> <li>● Electricity Supply</li> <li>● Electronic Technology</li> <li>● Highway Construction and Maintenance</li> <li>● Industrial Measurement and Control</li> <li>● Mechanical Engineering</li> <li>● Motor Industry</li> <li>● Pavement Surfacing</li> <li>● Textile</li> </ul>
6. Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nursing</li> <li>● Midwifery</li> <li>● Dental Support</li> </ul>



Fields	Scope of Coverage (Sub-Fields)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Occupational and Safety</li> <li>● Curative Health and Rehabilitative Health</li> <li>● Emergency Services</li> <li>● Health Studies</li> <li>● Mental Health</li> <li>● Natural and Traditional Health and Healing</li> <li>● Occupational Health and Safety</li> <li>● Pharmacy</li> <li>● Preventive Health</li> <li>● Promotive Health, and Developmental Services</li> <li>● Public Health</li> </ul>
7. Law and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Criminal Investigation</li> <li>● Harms against the person</li> <li>● Police</li> <li>● Property Crime and Procedures</li> <li>● Safety in Society</li> <li>● Biosecurity</li> <li>● Compliance and Law Enforcement</li> <li>● Justice in Society and Sovereignty of the State</li> <li>● Offender Management</li> <li>● Security</li> <li>● Justice in Society and Sovereignty of the State</li> </ul>
8. Information & Communication Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Computing</li> <li>● Information Technology</li> <li>● Communication Technology</li> <li>● Computer Human Interactions</li> <li>● Computing Systems Support</li> <li>● Information Security</li> </ul>
9. Social Services/ Service Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Civil Defence</li> <li>● Diving</li> <li>● Hospitality</li> <li>● Maritime</li> <li>● Secretarial Studies</li> <li>● Tourism</li> <li>● Tourism Management</li> <li>● Youth Development</li> <li>● Travel</li> <li>● Transport</li> <li>● Operations and Logistics</li> <li>● Personal Care</li> <li>● Wholesale and Retail</li> <li>● Consumer Services and Utilities</li> </ul>

Fields	Scope of Coverage (Sub-Fields)
10. Planning and Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Architecture</li> <li>● Building Construction</li> <li>● Construction</li> <li>● Construction Trade</li> <li>● Masonry</li> <li>● Painting and Decorating</li> <li>● Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying</li> <li>● Quantity Surveying</li> <li>● Surveying</li> <li>● Design and Management</li> <li>● Civil Engineering Construction and Electrical Infrastructure Construction</li> </ul>
11. Generic Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Core Generic</li> <li>● Communication</li> <li>● Literacy</li> <li>● Numeracy</li> <li>● Problem Solving</li> <li>● Team Skills</li> <li>● Entrepreneurship</li> <li>● Self Management and Work Ready</li> </ul>
12. Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bible Studies</li> <li>● Divinity</li> <li>● Ministerial Formation</li> <li>● Lay Preaching</li> <li>● Theological Studies</li> <li>● Christian Ministries</li> <li>● Christian Studies</li> <li>● Christian Theology</li> <li>● Communication Skills</li> <li>● English</li> <li>● Health and Physical Education</li> <li>● Languages</li> <li>● Pacific Studies</li> <li>● Religious Studies</li> <li>● Sports Education</li> </ul>
13. Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mathematics</li> <li>● Science</li> <li>● Environment</li> <li>● Home and Life Sciences</li> <li>● Statistics and Probability</li> </ul>

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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