

# **TONGA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND ACCREDITATION BOARD**



## **POLICIES FOR REVIEWS OF QUALIFICATIONS LEVELS 1-6 2019**

**CONTENT PAGE**

Introduction .....3

Legislation .....4

Purpose .....5

Roles and responsibilities .....6

Time to complete a review .....7

Costs of the review .....7

The review process .....7

Managing challenges .....10

Annex 1: Qualification Review Report.....11

Annex 2: Key to Qualification Review Categories .....13

## **Introduction**

Tonga recognised the need to reform education and training 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 range of post-compulsory education training programmes are available, they generally do not lead to qualifications that are recognised by potential employers.

The Tonga Qualifications Framework (TQF) was developed and 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.

The Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB) set standards for qualifications and provide quality assurance services by registering providers, accrediting programmes and conducting audits and reviews. The Board will review all qualifications currently offered by Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) providers and position them on the TQF. The purpose of this policy is to provide policy for reviewing of Qualifications from Levels 1-6. The review will use the TNQAB accreditation standards limited to standard 2.

## **Scope**

This policy provides instructions for TNQAB officers when reviewing a qualification registered on the Tonga Qualification Framework Levels 1-6. It also provides

instructions for providers and qualification developers for the internal review of the qualifications registered qualifications.

The policy is not intended to be used for Accreditation Standard 1 and 3.

## **Legislation**

The Board's mandate to carry out this review is stipulated in the following Section 8 Part B

### ***Review of courses or unit***

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

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

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

*(b) the standard of educational content of the approved course of study;*

*(c) the appropriateness of the qualification; and*

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

### ***18 Review team***

*(1) A review team shall carry out the review under section 17.*

*(2) The review team shall consist of —*

*(a) a Chairman nominated from the Board;*

*(b) a representative with content expertise and industry focus; and*

*(c) a representative from Tonga or overseas with the educational expertise in the field of the course of study.*

*(3) The Board shall notify the provider of the outcome of the review within 3 weeks of completion of its review.*

### ***19 Recommendations of review team***

*(1) Where the review team recommends to the Board improvements to the provider, the Board shall notify the provider of this recommendation.*

*(2) The Board shall allow the provider 3 months to make the improvements that were recommended under subsection (1).*

*(3) Where the provider has not carried out the improvements notified by the Board and based on the review, the Board shall in writing, cancel —*

*(a) registration of a provider's accreditation for that course or unit of study; or*

*(b) the approval of a course of study.*

*(4) The Board shall publish such cancellation.*

*(5) Where a provider's registration of approval is cancelled under subsection (3), he shall refund the relevant fees or portion thereof.*

The Tonga Qualification Framework Policies Section 5 – Qualification Review states that :

- 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 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 two years by TNQAB as part of programme accreditation and/or the quality audit.
- 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.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of reviewing a qualification is to ensure it remains useful and relevant and continues to meet the needs of the learners, industry and stakeholders for which it was initially developed. Wherever appropriate, the qualification should be considered in relation to the strategic workforce requirements of the industry as a whole.

A review is an important mechanism for managing duplication and proliferation of qualifications and ensures qualifications meet all the requirements for registration on the TQF. For some industries, it may be appropriate for the industry/community, tertiary education organisations and sector groups to identify a recognised independent group or individual to lead a specific review.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

TNQAB is responsible for:

- developing, negotiating and publishing an annual schedule for qualification reviews
- initiating and tracking each qualification review
- identifying and liaising with all relevant qualification developers (where a group of qualifications is being reviewed together)
- reviewing the plan for each review
- Update the Qualification Registration details and unit descriptors, if changes are identified
- providing support in developing capability in qualification review
- following up and working with any qualification developers who choose not to participate in a scheduled review to determine the status of their existing qualifications on the TQF following the outcome of the review.

Qualification developers<sup>1</sup> are responsible for:

- planning and conducting periodic reviews of qualifications developed by them and in accordance with the schedule of reviews
- submitting the plan for the review to TNQAB, ensuring the approach to the review is cost effective and appropriate for the number and range of stakeholders involved to enable their participation
- coordinating and communicating with relevant stakeholders

---

<sup>1</sup> These refer to providers or training organizations who develop their own qualifications or organizations that develop the national qualifications

- liaising with TNQAB if any industry or mandatory stakeholder chooses not to participate in the qualification review
- working with the industry/community and TNQAB to identify relevant sector leaders where these are needed to support the qualification review
- implementing approved recommendations
- agreeing to accept the outcomes of the review including changes in status to their own qualification
- nominating a delegate if it chooses not to participate in the scheduled review.
- evaluate the qualification characteristics against the criteria for registration of qualification
- teaching and learning resources
- and recommendations for changes to qualifications as a result of a review
- review process for each qualification review
- reporting the outcomes of the review and recommendations to TNQAB

### **3. Time to complete a review**

The qualification review must normally be completed within 6 months from the qualification review date registered on the TQF. Implementation of recommended changes to qualifications will immediately follow the review. Failure to meet this timeline without a reasonable explanation may result in the status of the qualification(s) on the TQF being changed to *Expiring*.

### **4. Costs of a review**

The qualification developer(s) in conjunction with stakeholders are responsible for any costs associated with the review. It is expected this will be a contributory process with costs shared appropriately between participants. The costs of developing new qualifications will be borne by the qualification developer(s).

## 5. The review process

There are three stages in the conduct of a review.

### ***Stage 1: Initiating a review***

Each year TNQAB will publish a schedule of qualifications to be reviewed. Qualifications will be scheduled for review based on:

- qualification review date specified on the TQF Registration Form and/or one or more of the following triggers:
- identified duplication and proliferation especially in areas of economic and strategic importance
- workforce changes or social, industry and technological shifts which may require a new qualification or category of worker
- changes in legislation or government policy
- lack of use of a qualification e.g. after two years
- a request from the qualification developer.

TNQAB will advise all the relevant qualification developer(s) as each review is initiated and request that a plan for the review be submitted to TNQAB within 6 months of the qualification review date.

Providers of a qualification may also request TNQAB to initiate a qualification review. If a qualification developer does not agree<sup>2</sup> to carry out a qualification review, TNQAB will, in the first instance, take action to initiate a review.

### ***Stage 2: Undertaking the review***

The Developer will:

a. develop a plan with timelines and approach to:

---

<sup>2</sup> Due to extenuating circumstances



- assess the current need and demand for the qualification(s) and the fit with the demonstrated current and future requirements of learners, industry and stakeholders
- identify and address any issues of duplication with similar qualifications on the framework
- review the arrangements for consistency across the application of the qualification(s)
- involve and consult with appropriate stakeholders, consistent with the qualification's Stakeholder Profile and incorporate their feedback. Mandatory stakeholders would include tertiary education organisations currently providing programmes of study and training leading to the qualification.

b. conduct the review (by engaging the recommended panel composition) and make provision to align the resulting qualifications with the requirements for registering a qualification at levels 1-6 on the TQF

c. prepare and submit a review outcome report to TNQAB at the completion of the review, which summarises the process of the review, its findings and the recommendations for any changes to be made which may include:

- no changes to one or more of the qualifications
- changes resulting in one or more new qualification versions
- developing one or more new qualifications
- expiring or discontinuing one or more qualifications.

Transition arrangements are required where the status of the qualification is being changed to expiring. The report will include the proposed timeframe and approach to implementing the changes to qualifications. TNQAB's acceptance of the recommendations arising from the review of qualifications should meet the need for approval to develop a qualification.

### ***Stage 3: Implementing the recommendations***

The qualification developer(s) will implement the agreed recommendations and submit any new or revised qualifications to TNQAB for approval within the agreed timeframe. Qualifications submitted must meet the approval requirements of a qualification specified in the *Tonga Qualification Framework Policies*.

TNQAB will update the qualification record(s) on the TQF to ensure qualification details are accurate and complete.

## **6. Managing challenges to the review process**

### ***6.1 Delay in commencing the review***

In the event a scheduled review is not commenced or a review plan not submitted within the six month period, TNQAB will, in the first instance, follow up with the qualification developers to determine the reason for the non-compliance and agree remedial action to be taken.

If the remedial action is not completed then TNQAB may:

- refer the matter to the TNQAB Risk and Compliance team for further action
- reassign responsibility for the review to an alternate stakeholder
- co-ordinate the review

### ***6.2 Disputing review outcomes***

As part of its guardianship of the TQF, TNQAB is responsible for qualifications registered on the TQF and in this role is the final decision-maker on the outcome of a qualification review. It is anticipated that in the majority of cases there will be consensus over the outcome of a review process.

If an individual qualification developer or stakeholder proposes an outcome that TNQAB is unable to accept, then TNQAB will consult with the affected parties over its proposed final decision. In making its final decision, TNQAB will take into account the views expressed in the consultation and explain its decision.

## Annex 1: Qualification Review Report

<b>FIELD</b>		<b>SUB-FIELD</b>	
--------------	--	------------------	--

### 1. Name of qualification(s)

	Qualifications	Provider Qualifications
<b>Certificate :</b>		
<b>Diploma:</b>		
<b>Degree</b>		

### 2. Reviewer

<b>Name of Panel/ Industry Expert the qualifications listed above:</b>	
--	--

### 3. Replacement qualifications

List titles if the review resulted in replacement qualifications with new Title – or write N/A if not applicable.

Current Qualification Titles	Replaced with new Qualification Titles

### 4. Date

<b>Date new versions published:</b>	
-------------------------------------	--

## 5. Next Review

<b>Date for the next qualification review is planned to take place :</b>	
--	--

## 6. Summary of review and consultation process

<b>The reason for the review:</b>	
<b>Feedback from stakeholders:</b>	
<b>Relevance to ongoing industry/sector demand for the qualifications (<i>What is the industry needs, technology needs and industry success and failures?</i>):</b>	

--	--

## 6. Main changes resulting from the review

*(Give a brief summary, to give an indication of the extent and nature of the changes made).*

### 6.1 Certificate in (insert classification)

<b>Review category</b>	(Refer to Annex 2)
<b>Changes to structure and content</b>	

### 6.2 Diploma in (insert classification)

<b>Review category</b>	(Refer to Annex 2)
<b>Changes to structure and content</b>	

## 7. Transition

*Where necessary, transition arrangements include some or all of the following:*

- *The start date for programmes or courses for the new qualification/new version*
- *The last date for entry to programmes or courses for the replaced qualification/version*
- *The last date for assessments to take place for the replaced qualification/version*
- *Exemptions for expiring standards/modules*
- *Transition arrangements for expiring classifications*

## Annex 2: Key to Qualification Review Categories

<b>Category A</b> The qualification is published as a new version with the same TQF ID	Changes are made to ITAC. SWC name, contact details or purpose statement
	No change is made to title, rules or components of the qualification
	No transition arrangements are required
<b>Category B</b> The qualification is published as a new version with the same TQF ID	Changes are made to title, rules or components
	The new version of the qualification recognises a similar skill set to that recognised by the previous version
	The ITAC/ SWC is confident that people awarded the new or previous version are comparable in terms of competence
	Transition arrangements are required if candidates must gain additional/different credits for the new version
<b>Category C</b> A new (replacement) qualification is published with new TQF ID	Significant changes are made to the qualification in terms of components, structure, type or level
	The ITAC/ SWC views people with the replacement qualification as being significantly different in terms of competence from those with the replaced qualification
	Transition arrangements are required
	Transition may be limited to phase-out dates
<b>Category D</b> Qualification will expire. There is no replacement qualification	Qualification is no longer required by industry
	The qualification is designated as expiring and a last date for meeting the qualification requirements is set.

### Annex 3: Qualification Registration Details Form

<b>Name of Provider/ Training organization</b>	
<b>Qualification Developer</b>	
<b>Qualification Characteristics</b>	
<b>i. Purpose and Rationale</b>	
<b>ii. Qualification Title</b>	
<b>iii. Outcomes Statement</b>	
<b>iv. Qualification Level</b>	
<b>v. Total Credit Values</b>	
<b>vi. Qualification Components<sup>3</sup></b>	
<b>vii. Entry Requirements and Learning Assumed to be in Place</b>	
<b>viii. International Comparability</b>	
<b>ix. Recognition of Prior Learning</b>	

<sup>3</sup> Attach details of individual courses/ units or modules

<b>x. Learning Pathways</b>	
<b>xi. Support for Qualification</b>	
<b>xii. Next Review date</b>	



## Annex 4 – Unit Descriptors

<b>Unit Title and Code</b>	
<b>Unit Purpose</b>	
<b>Unit credit value</b>	
<b>TQF Level</b>	
<b>Learning Outcome 1</b>	
<b>Performance Standards</b>	
<b>Learning Outcome 2</b>	
<b>Performance Standards</b>	
<b>Learning Outcome 3</b>	
<b>Performance standards</b>	
<b>Pre-requisites and co-requisites</b>	
<b>Underpinning skill and knowledge</b>	
<b>Suggested assessment methods</b>	
<b>Resource requirements</b>	
<b>Moderation arrangements</b>	
<b>Accreditation Requirements</b>	
<b>Requirements</b>	

<b>to complete this unit</b>	
----------------------------------	--