

Bio

Dr Marie Benton PhD (*Ngāti Mahuta, Tūranga waewae Marae, Tainui Waka*) has had career in the global pharmaceutical industry as a pharmacologist and a pharmaceutical research director; and was contracted to NZQA for six years. Marie has wide research interests from a political, economic, social and cultural perspective through education and health lenses; with extensive research experience in both health and education.

What are the Principles that make New Zealand's innovative quality assurance management such a tradable global commodity?

Abstract

Firstly this article offers an overview to the development of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) as the Standard Setting Body (SSB) for New Zealand standards-based assessment and many national qualifications. Secondly, it introduces the principles of quality assurance management (QAM) and the influences underpinning the development of these principles. Then, thirdly, the article establishes their benchmarking as a reference point; and addresses the mandatory QAM principles required by NZQA. Fourthly, the article examines NZQA Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Moderation through their respective principles demonstrated through a comparative summary table. Finally a summary articulating New Zealand's innovative quality assurance management as a tradable commodity to support international education services in the highly competitive global economic market is presented.

Key words: principles, benchmarking, standards-based assessment, moderation

Introductory Background

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) was established in 1991 with the key function of having an overview of qualifications in compulsory and post-compulsory education and training. This function was exercised initially through the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), comprised of National Certificates and Diplomas and their component unit standards. NZQA has a legislative function within the Education Act 1989 to develop a framework for national qualifications to establish policies and criteria that will allow organisations to be granted accreditation to provide courses of study and training.

Dr Jim Frey commented at the NZQA 21st Century Conference at Victoria University Wellington as President, Senior Advisor and Founder, Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. of Milwaukee that when educators and government officials use the term qualification, they generally have in mind that a qualification represents completion of some kind of educational transformation programme, or some type of training programme, or some kind of skills tests. Thus a qualification is generally represented by a certificate, diploma, degree, license, or some combination thereof.

Dr Andrew West, the NZQA Chief Executive in 1991 commented that the Qualification Authority's essential role will be to sustain the quality standard of New Zealand qualifications primarily through standards-based assessment. He commented that "this cannot simply be imposed and would like to see this type of quality assurance recognised as a valid

method of quality assurance management by the education sector and by all aspects of New Zealand’s broader society”.¹

The NQF has now been expanded through the development of the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications, TeĀhurutanga (the Register) introduced in 2001. A website called KiwiQuals is the public face of the Register introduced after extensive consultation and support from the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (NZVCC) and the Institute of Technology and Polytechnics in New Zealand (ITPNZ).

The Register provides a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand and enhances New Zealand’s capacity to benchmark qualifications internationally. NZQA is mindful of other activities that are happening internationally in terms of the transportability of qualifications (particularly within Europe).²

NZQA is constantly reviewing the standards-based assessment unit and achievement standards together with the numerous qualifications offered on the NQF. NZQA offers a variety of qualifications where there are set criteria which establish the minimum credit and level requirements for each type of qualification and these are wide ranging. They include a Certificate set at Levels one to four; Diploma set at Levels five and six; Bachelor degrees, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates set at Level 7; Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates; Bachelor degrees with Honours set at Level 8; Masters degree set at level 9; and Doctorates set at Level ten. The following overview demonstrates NZQA’s tertiary levels of achievement and the relative qualifications offered on the New Zealand Framework (NZF).

10	Doctorates
9	Masters Degrees
8	Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Bachelors Degrees with Honours
7	Bachelors Degrees, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates
6	Diplomas
5	
4	
3	Certificates
2	
1	
1	

It is possible for a qualification to include credit achieved at levels above and below the level at which the qualification is registered. NZQA has the following requirements for approval for new or additional qualifications:

- Must have the support of the nationally recognised bodies.

¹New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Qualifications in the 21st Century: NZQA International Conference, VictoriaUniversityWellington, New Zealand 1991.

¹ NZQA QAnews, May 2001.

²NZQA The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications, October 2007, p. 4.

- Meet the obligations of the Standard Setting Body (SSB) under the Treaty of Waitangi, and include a Māori dimension wherever that is appropriate.
- Not present any barriers based on gender, ethnic origin, disability, or unreasonable cost.
- Are different in purpose from any other registered on the NZF.
- Are flexible in structure where appropriate, and provide learners with attainable milestones, career options and a qualifications pathway.
- Recognise broad transferrable and generic skills as well as specialized and industry and professional skills.

The Principles of Quality Assurance Management

Quality management is the systematic monitoring and continued evaluation to ensure that whatever is being offered is ‘fit for purpose’ and will be specific to the particular industry or service where the quality will be determined by those that are using it. Thus to ensure credibility principles or standards will apply and will usually serve as a bench mark. In the global context NZQA is the quality assurance management process New Zealand’s formally recognised educational achievements and the following summary table demonstrates the development of the Principles through Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Moderation.

<u>Accreditation</u> <u>Principle 1</u> Partnerships <u>Principle 2</u> Continuity <u>Principle 3</u> Evolution <u>Principle 4</u> Process	<u>Principle 1</u> Partnerships Accreditation is intended to protect the interests of students benefit the public, improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice through an established structure	<u>Principle 2</u> Continuity Accrediting body is expected to encourage institutional freedom, ongoing improvement of educational institutions and training programs.	<u>Principle 3</u> Evolution Accreditation should be sound educational experimentation and constructive innovation.	<u>Principle 4</u> Process Accreditation process involves judging the degree to which a program has achieved the goals and objectives of its stated training model.
<u>Quality Assurance</u> <u>Principle 1</u> Partnerships <u>Principle 2</u> Continuity <u>Principle 3</u> Evolution <u>Principle 4</u>	<u>Principle 1</u> Partnerships Quality Assurance sets out a standard and/or a reference point against which a qualification (or a part thereof) can be measured.	<u>Principle 2</u> Continuity Quality Assurance is reaching a certain level of quality that is benchmarked	<u>Principle 3</u> Evolution Quality Assurance is documenting the procedures and staying there.	<u>Principle 4</u> Process Quality Assurance is to measure, analyse, assess and describe as measured against an agreed outcome or benchmark

<u>Process</u>				
<u>Moderation</u>	<u>Principle 1</u> Partnerships	<u>Principle 2</u> Continuity	<u>Principle 3</u> Evolution	<u>Principle 4</u> Process
<u>Principle 1</u> Partnerships	Best practice moderation occurs when it is based on an effective partnership between assessors and between assessors and moderators.	Best practice moderation occurs when it is an ongoing process that underpins relationships between assessors and between assessors and moderators.	Best practice moderation is an evolving and educative process for assessors and moderators.	Best practice moderation occurs when the assessments are fair, valid and at the national standard.
<u>Principle 2</u> Continuity				
<u>Principle 3</u> Evolution				
<u>Principle 4</u> Process				

Conclusions

Exactly what is the relevancy of State Owned Enterprises such as NZQA, or a semi autonomous Crown Entity such as the New Zealand Teachers Council; and Government Ministries such as the Ministry of Education to an ECE Centre? Firstly NZQA as the Standard Setting Body (SSB) for New Zealand provides a very wide range of assessment-based standards and qualifications that are internationally recognised. It may be that the education provider has its own qualifications and quality assurance management procedures; but all education providers are required to be accredited by NZQA; and regularly reviewed (previously audited) to maintain accreditation. And as part of the NZQA Review process is to maintain accreditation through validation of a robust quality assurance management process.

Thus quality assurance is through: skills assessment, method of assessment, validation of assessment and moderation of assessment in an NZQA accredited fit for purpose establishment. In short, it is through the assessment and moderation process of: pre-assessment, moderation, peer-moderation, post-moderation and check-moderation that can be both internal and external. The quality assurance management of standards-based assessment for most New Zealand qualifications is monitored through the policy, processes and procedures of NZQA. This process is conducted through a robust assessment and moderation programme that is both internally within the education provider and/or externally through contracted NZQA. NZQA is then accountable to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Tertiary Education

Indeed with free trade and regional or cluster-country agreements it is anticipated that franchising and twinning agreements will be a commonality with all tertiary educational institutions and could include secondary schools. As many of the traditional resources throughout the world are starting to diminish and the impact of technology introduces new ways of thinking or doing things the current quality assurance platform will require adjustment and change. It is anticipated that franchise and international twinning agreements will be globally inclusive because education services have now become a part of the global economy as a tradable commodity. New Zealand's education and quality assurance management processes are recognised as innovative and very high quality. In June 2007, New Zealand's request to accede to the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications was approved. This accession will help improve the understanding of the New Zealand

qualifications system and the recognition of New Zealand qualifications by other signatory countries.³

Summing up now, the process of quality assurance management requires that the benchmark or an established reference point addresses the principles as the mandatory standards; and will vary between and within the applicable industry. There is always a common denominator that underpins the benchmark reflecting the quality assurance management within a specified industry; where an organisation will set its own standards derived from the principles of the SSB. NZQA is the SSB for New Zealand qualifications registered on the NZF and provides the quality assurance benchmark for qualifications in New Zealand through a variety of education and training providers. Education in training providers include: Polytechnics, Private Training Enterprises (PTE's), Wānanga, Industry Training Organisations (ITO's) and secondary schools through the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA). The University Vice-Chancellors representatives also liaise to and report through the current Chief Executive Officer of NZQA Dr Karen Poutasi MD.

³NZQA The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications, May 2010, p. 4.

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