



Pacific  
Community  

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Communauté  
du Pacifique

# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

## GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND ACCREDITATION OF PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme:  
Pacific Community



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# Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations .....	iv
Introduction .....	1
<b>SECTION 1: The Pacific Qualifications Framework .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Qualification Type Definitions .....	2
1.2 Qualification Level and Credit Profiles .....	5
<b>SECTION 2: Principles Underpinning the Development of Qualifications.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Needs Based Qualifications .....	7
2.2 Development .....	7
<b>SECTION 3: Guidelines on Criteria and Requirements for Accreditation .....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Qualification Title .....	8
3.2 Subject Area .....	8
3.3 Level and Credit Point .....	8
3.3.1 Credit .....	8
3.3.2 Notional learning hours .....	8
3.3.3 Determining credit point and the level of a qualification .....	9
3.4 Purpose Statement.....	9
3.5 Outcome Statement .....	10
3.6 Components .....	11
3.7 Learning Outcomes.....	12
3.8 Co-requisites and Pre-requisites .....	13
3.9 Component Completion Requirements .....	13
3.10 Qualification Design, Approval and Review.....	14
3.11 Resource Requirements for Qualification Delivery .....	15
3.12 Qualification Completion Requirements.....	15
3.13 Supporting Documents.....	16
<b>SECTION 4: Application for Accreditation of a Provider Qualification.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SECTION 5: Criteria and Outcomes for Qualification Accreditation.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SECTION 6: Outcomes of Provider Qualification Accreditation Application .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendices - Appendix 1: The PQF Level Descriptors .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendices - Appendix 2: Qualification Document Template .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>25</b>

# List of Abbreviations

**EQAP** Educational Quality and Assessment Programme

**IPAC** Industry Programme Advisory Committee

**ISAC** Industry Standards Advisory Committee

**PQAF** Pacific Quality Assurance Framework

**PQF** Pacific Qualifications Framework

# Introduction

This document has been developed to assist institutions that are intending to develop qualifications and seek their accreditation on the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards by the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP).

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- the **Pacific Qualifications Framework** (PQF); and
- the **Pacific Quality Assurance Framework** (PQAF). The PQAF contains standards and guidelines on the quality assurance of qualifications and units of learning.

The document describes the levels, credits and type of qualifications; process to be followed in the development and packaging of qualifications; and the criteria and outcomes that a qualification would be subjected to during its accreditation. Examples of how certain questions in the application form could be answered are also contained within the document.

# SECTION 1:

## The Pacific Qualifications Framework

The Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF) is a 10-level framework that aims to facilitate the realisation of a good quality education and training system in the Pacific Islands region. A qualification that has been accredited will be registered on the PQF at the appropriate level. Shown below is the PQF in relation to level and qualification type.

Level	Qualification Type
10	Doctorate
9	Master's Degree
8	Bachelor's Degree with Honours, Post-graduate Certificate, Post-graduate Diploma
7	Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma
6	Diploma/Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree
5	Diploma
4	Certificate
3	Certificate
2	Certificate
1	Certificate

### 1.1

#### Qualification Type Definitions

The descriptions of qualification types on the PQF are shown below.

##### PQF Level 10

#### Doctorate Degree (PhD)

A Doctorate is a research-based degree whereby the candidate becomes an increasingly independent scholar who makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge. It is normally the culmination of study, which begins with a Bachelor's Degree and reaches a stage beyond the Master's Degree. For the PhD and the named Doctorate, this development takes place under the guidance of recognised experts in the field of study and under circumstances that allow the candidate access to appropriate research resources. The Doctorate is awarded on the basis of an original and substantial contribution to knowledge as judged by independent experts who apply contemporary international standards from within the discipline. The hallmark for achievement will be the candidate's capacity for substantial independent research or creative activity as attested by the educational institution and/or as demonstrated by submitted work.

The major component of all Doctorates is original research. The body of work that leads to the award of a Doctorate will be one of the following:

- A thesis (the PhD).
- Creative work in the visual or performing arts (the PhD).
- A thesis or equivalent creative work in combination with coursework (the named Doctorate).
- A thesis in combination with a creative work in the visual or performing arts (the named Doctorate).
- Published work (the higher Doctorate).

## PQF Level 9

### Master's Degree

A Master's Degree qualifies candidates who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research, a pathway for further learning, professional practice and/or scholarship. Master's Degrees usually build on a Bachelor's Degree, Graduate Diploma, Bachelor's Degree with Honours or a Post-graduate Diploma. They usually build on extensive professional experience of an appropriate kind. Their outcomes are demonstrably at an advanced level above under-graduate study, and require candidates to engage in research and/or advanced scholarship. Master's Degrees are constituted in one discipline or a coherent programme of study. They may be undertaken by coursework or research, or by a combination of both.

## PQF Level 8

### Bachelor's Degree with Honours Post-graduate Diploma Post-graduate Certificate

#### **Bachelor's Degree with Honours:**

A Bachelor's Degree with Honours recognises distinguished study at Level 8. It may either be a Degree in itself, or a discrete Post-graduate Degree following a Bachelor's Degree. A Bachelor's Degree with Honours may recognise a particular level of achievement in a Bachelor's Degree (480 credits or more) – especially in relation to work of a research nature (typically at Level 8) – and/or achievement of Level 8 following a Level 7 Bachelor's Degree.

#### **Post-graduate Diploma:**

A Post-graduate Diploma is designed to extend and deepen a candidate's knowledge and skills by building on attainment in the principal subject(s) of the qualifying Degree, Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate. It prepares a candidate for independent research and scholarship in the principal subject of the Diploma.

#### **Post-graduate Certificate:**

A Post-graduate Certificate is designed to extend and deepen a candidate's knowledge and skills. A Post-graduate Certificate involves credits from a specified subject and its associated areas. It recognises continuing professional development or academic achievement at an advanced level above the candidate's original Bachelor's Degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma. Post-graduate Certificates require a Bachelor's Degree or Graduate Certificate, or a Diploma in a related subject or relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience.

## PQF Level 7

### Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate Bachelor's Degree

#### **Graduate Diploma:**

A Graduate Diploma is designed for degree graduates to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced under-graduate level. The Graduate Diploma is typically designed as a bridging qualification to Post-graduate study as well as broadening knowledge and skills in a familiar subject or discipline, or developing knowledge in a new area.

#### **Graduate Certificate:**

A Graduate Certificate is designed as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue further study at an advanced under-graduate level. The Graduate Certificate is typically designed as a bridging qualification to Post-graduate study for candidates who wish to develop 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 under-graduate qualification.

#### **Bachelor's Degree:**

A Bachelor's Degree is a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject (or subjects in the case of a double Degree or a double major) as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques for self-directed work and learning. A Bachelor's Degree involves at least one sequential study programme in which content is progressively developed such that it might form a basis for Post-graduate study and/or professional practice.

## PQF Level 6

### Associate Degree Diploma

#### **Associate Degree:**

An associate Degree is a programme designed to recognise successful progression to the full Degree or directly to employment. These Degrees focus on learning within a work context that is underpinned by both vocational and academic understanding, and enable learners to demonstrate learning outcomes that are explicitly relevant to employment and professional requirements.

#### **Diploma:**

A Diploma at level 6 is designed to equip learners with technical and/or theoretical knowledge and skills within a broad field or with depth in one area, and is applied in context that is subject to change and some complexity.

## PQF Level 5

### Diploma

A Diploma at Level 5 is designed to equip learners with technical and/or theoretical knowledge and skills within a broad field or in a specified field of work or study or for further studies. The qualification recognises the ability to apply knowledge and skills in varied contexts with some autonomy, judgement and general guidance.

## PQF Level 4 Certificate IV

A Certificate Level 4 qualification is designed to equip learners with a broad range of technical and theoretical knowledge and skills that will support work in a stable and sometimes unpredictable environment in varied contexts.

## PQF Level 3 Certificate III

A Certificate Level 3 qualification is designed to equip learners with knowledge and skills to perform routine tasks in a stable and predictable environment that requires routine supervision or further studies.

## PQF Level 2 Certificate II

A Certificate Level 2 qualification is designed to equip learners with knowledge and skills that will support work in a structured and stable environment with close guidance and direction or to facilitate further studies.

## PQF Level 1 Certificate I

A Certificate Level 1 qualification is designed to equip learners with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and/or community involvement.

## 1.2 Qualification Level and Credit Profile

The rules on credit points that are applied to determine the levels of qualifications are shown below.

Qualification type	Level	Min. overall	Max. <sup>1</sup> overall	Number of credits at highest level	Number of credits at lowest level
Doctorate	10	360	480		
Master's Degree	9	240	480	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 9 with the remainder at Level 8, <i>or</i>	Minimum 240 credits at Levels 8 and 9
		120		Minimum of 40 credits at Level 9 with the remainder at Level 8	Minimum of 120 credits at Levels 8 and 9 (if programme is preceded by four years of prior study at Bachelor's Degree or above)
Post-graduate Diploma	8	120	240	Minimum of 72 credits at Level 8	Minimum of 120 credits from Level 7 and above
Post-graduate Certificate	8	60	120	Minimum of 60 credits at Level 8	
Graduate Diploma	7	120	240	Minimum of 72 credits at Level 7 or above	

<sup>1</sup> Maximum is a suggested field.

Qualification type	Level	Min. overall	Max. <sup>1</sup> overall	Number of credits at highest level	Number of credits at lowest level
Graduate Certificate	7	60	120	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 7 or above	
Bachelor's Degree with Honours	8	480 120		Minimum of 120 credits embedded in a 480 credit (or more) Bachelor's Degree (at Level 8) at a particular level of achievement <sup>2</sup> , <i>or</i>  Minimum of 120 credits at Level 8 following a Level 7 Bachelor's Degree (either as a part of an integrated Honours Degree or as a separate qualification), with a research component	Minimum of 30 credits at Level 8 of research component
Bachelor's Degree	7	360	480	Minimum of 72 credits at Level 7 or higher  The Degree should specify a spread of credit across levels so that the qualification demonstrates progression, reflects the requirements of the Degree definition and achieves the associated learning outcomes in a way that is appropriate to the subject area	Minimum of 360 credits at Levels 5–7
Diploma	6	120	240	At least 72 credits at Level 6.	Minimum of 120 of all credits at Level 5 and above
Diploma	5	120	240	At least 72 credits at Level 5.	Minimum of 120 of all credits at Level 4 and above
Certificate	4	40	240	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 4 or above	
Certificate	3	40	240	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 3 or above	
Certificate	2	40	120	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 2 or above	
Certificate	1	40	120	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 1 or above	

<sup>1</sup> Maximum is a suggested field.

<sup>2</sup> An exit point that meets the requirements of a Bachelor's Degree must be provided at end of study.

## SECTION 2:

# Principles Underpinning the Development of Qualifications

Qualifications are based on need, outcomes, flexibility and collaboration. This approach is intended to provide a simple structure for qualifications and programmes, such that the qualifications could be offered in the context of the respective Pacific Island country.

Qualifications are designed to identify the underpinning skills, knowledge and attributes Graduates need to perform a range of roles across a broad context.

The following principles underpin the design and development of qualifications:

### 2.1 Needs Based Qualifications

The determination of the usefulness, relevance and value of the qualification is based on its relationship with the workforce and skill needs of learners, employers, industry and communities in the country. Evidence is required to establish and demonstrate workforce and skill needs. The need for a qualification must be established after consultation with the stakeholders in the country.

### 2.2 Development

For a qualification to be appropriate for and relevant to the needs of a country, the industry must be engaged in the development of standards. The industry experts constitute what is generally referred to as the *Industry Standards Advisory Committee (ISAC)* or *Industry Programme Advisory Committee (IPAC)*. ISAC or IPAC provide professional input in the development of standards that constitute a qualification. The composition of the ISAC/IPAC would be considered appropriate if more than 50 per cent of the stakeholders that present the need for the qualification are represented within it.

The following process must be followed in the development of a regional qualification:

- a. Establish the need for a regional qualification and seek industry's approval for the qualification.
- b. Establish the ISAC/IPAC.
- c. Develop the draft qualification and its components.
- d. Circulate the draft qualification to the stakeholders and call for feedback.
- e. Collate feedback and revise the draft qualification accordingly.
- f. Convene a meeting with stakeholders and ISAC/IPAC to seek formal endorsement of the qualification.

## SECTION 3:

# Guidelines on Criteria and Requirements for Accreditation

This section explains the requirements for accreditation of a qualification and provides guidance to persons intending to submit an application.

### 3.1 Qualification Title

Programme and qualification titles should provide a concise, accurate and informative indication of the purpose and outcomes of qualifications. The title should indicate the overall intent of the qualification. Programmes will generally use the title of the qualification that is awarded as a result of successful completion of the qualification.

**Examples of qualification titles are as follows:**

- Certificate IV in Carpentry and Joinery.
- Post-graduate Certificate in Computing.

### 3.2 Subject Area

Subject area refers to the field of study. For example, the subject area for the qualification Certificate IV in Carpentry and Joinery is ***Building and Construction***.

### 3.3 Level and Credit Point

#### 3.3.1 Credit

Credit provides a means of quantifying learning outcomes that are achievable in notional learning hours at a given level. On the PQF, one credit is approximately equivalent to 10 notional hours of learning activity. Credit is awarded for the achievement of specified learning outcomes. No additional credit can be awarded for achievement above the threshold level.

#### 3.3.2 Notional learning hours

‘Notional learning hours’ refers to the estimated learning time taken by the ‘average’ student to achieve the specified learning outcomes of a course unit or programme. This is therefore not a precise measure but provides students with an indication of the amount of study time and Degree of commitment that is expected. Notional learning time includes teaching contact time (lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory practical classes, workshops, fieldwork, etc.), time spent on preparing and carrying out formative and summative assessments (written coursework, oral presentations, exams, etc.) and time spent on private study, whether in term-time or during vacation times.

### 3.3.3 Determining credit point and the level of a qualification

To determine credit points and the level of qualification, one must consider the associated learning outcomes.

The credit value of a learning outcome is the volume of learning, in time, required by an average learner to achieve the learning outcome. *Thus, if an average learner requires 30 hours to achieve a learning outcome, the credit associated with the learning outcome is 3. A learner who takes more time to achieve the outcome does not earn any extra credit.*

The **PQF Level Descriptors** define the level of complexity of learning, in terms of the knowledge, skills and application acquired by the learner at each level. These level descriptors are shown in **Appendix 1**. To determine the level of a learning outcome, one must compare the learning outcome with the level descriptors. The level of a learning outcome is the PQF level at which the descriptors match the learning outcome.

The determination of credit points and level of learning outcomes is technical in nature and requires the involvement of subject experts.

After the levels and credits of all learning outcomes have been determined, they must be aggregated and a credit profile as shown in the table below, must be formulated:

Level	No. of Credits
6	Xx
5	Xx
4	Xx
3	Xx
2	Xx
1	Xx
<b>Total</b>	xxx

The credit points for the qualification are the total amount of credit points of all learning outcomes at all levels in a whole number only.

It must be noted that the levels of learning outcomes are not restricted to levels 1 to 6. The levels of learning outcomes range from 1 to 10. The table above is only a condensed structure.

To determine the level of qualification, the rules on credit points shown in Section 1.2 (PQF Qualification Level and Credit Profiles), should be applied.

## 3.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose statement should identify any specifically targeted student body and the relationship between the qualification and any industrial, professional or community need. Purpose statements must:

- identify the target group of learners;
- identify why learners should study the qualification;
- consider the needs of industry, and how the qualification aims to meet these needs;<sup>3</sup> and
- be aligned with the relevant PQF Level Descriptor.

**Examples of qualification purpose statement are shown below.**

1. The Certificate IV in Mechanical Engineering, with strands in Fitting and Machining, Tool Making and Maintenance Engineering is a trade qualification for people in the engineering industry. It is intended to provide training for people in occupations that are traditionally referred to as fitters, fitters and turners, fitters and welders, maintenance and diagnostics engineers, maintenance fitters, power station fitters, toolmakers, precision machinists, and machine tool setters.

The qualification combines a broad, common foundation of mechanical engineering with more specialised skills and knowledge in the form of strands to suit the nature of the particular trade or enterprise that the individual is engaged in.

The Fitting and Machining strand typically involves machining, assembly, and alignment of components to close tolerances, machine installation, and hydraulic or pneumatic control systems. Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) machinery and simple tool making may be involved in some enterprises. Additional training provides the special skills needed for each strand, and elective unit standards are chosen to match the range of work available in the candidate's enterprise. The structure has been designed so that the elective choices made by apprentices or trainees will naturally reflect the unique nature of their occupation and strand.

2. The Certificate in Tourism Fashion and Design is specially designed for secondary school leavers who opt for technical skills, are interested and have the potential for tourism fashion and design (Forms 5 and 6, or higher), and wish to expand understanding, knowledge and skills required for both self and business employment. Its aims at improving the lives of low-income Tongans and caters for the needs of the out-of-school youths. 'Áhopanilolo strives to teach, update, up-grade and continue the development of this course for the betterment of its students'.

## 3.5 Outcome Statement

The qualification outcome statement reflects the achievement of the stated purpose and specific knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes acquired by learners. The outcome statement must:

- describe the knowledge and skills that the learner has achieved;
- mention the pathways to other qualifications and employment opportunities; and
- be aligned with the respective level on the framework and its level descriptors.

<sup>3</sup> The purpose will differ from learning outcomes. The purpose identifies why the qualification should be delivered, while learning outcomes identify what learners should achieve as a result of the qualification.

An example of a qualification outcome statement is shown below.

A holder of the Certificate IV in Mechanical Engineering would have acquired competence, skills, and knowledge in health and safety, measurement and tolerancing, tools, materials and metals, sketching, drawing interpretation, trade calculations, mechanics, hydraulics, pneumatics, basic machining, welding, fitting, assembly and job costing.

A holder of this qualification would have the skills that are required to work as a fitter, fitter and turner, fitter and welder, maintenance and diagnostics engineer, maintenance fitters, power station fitter, toolmaker, precision machinist, and machine tool setter.

Having completed this qualification in one strand, candidates need only complete the additional strand requirements to gain this qualification in a second strand.

Those who have achieved this qualification may wish to continue training for a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering.

### 3.6 Components

The qualification components are major blocks, chunks of learning or identifiable parts of a qualification. Components are also referred to as modules, units of competencies/learning and subjects. Figure 1 below diagrammatically represents components in relation to a qualification (where C means component).

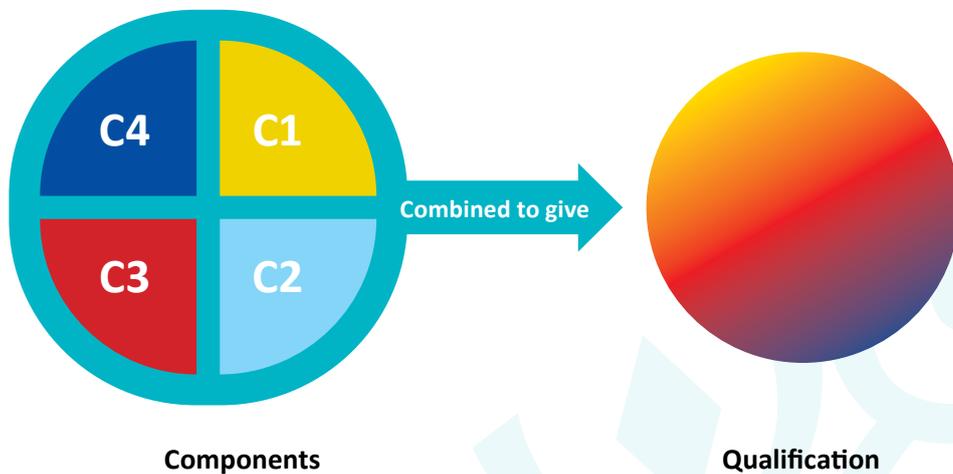


Figure 1. Diagram illustrating the relationship between components and a qualification.

**Example:** For the qualification Certificate IV in English Language, the four components could be Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

### 3.7 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that specify what students will have to know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate when they have completed or participated in a programme/activity/course/project. These are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, attitudes or values. Learning outcomes specify an action by the student that must be observable, measurable and able to be demonstrated.

Learning outcomes consist of a noun, verb and condition/context.

#### Examples of learning outcomes are as follows:

- To provide room service in accordance with hotel procedures.
- To integrate single variable mathematical expressions using the techniques of integration.
- To repair a punctured tyre of a car in a tyre repair centre.

#### Learning outcomes must use action verbs.

Examples of action verbs that could be used in the development of learning outcomes are analyse, apply, argue, arrange, assemble, assess, calculate, categorise, choose, classify, compare, compile, compute, create, criticise, critique, defend, define, demonstrate, describe, design, develop, differentiate, discuss, distinguish, estimate, examine, explain, formulate, identify, illustrate, indicate, interpret, label, list, locate, manage, memorise, order, operate, organise, plan, practice, predict, prepare, propose, question, rate, recognise, repeat, report, reproduce, review, revise, schedule, select, solve, state, translate, use, utilise, and write. The verb wheel in figure 2, which is based on Bloom’s taxonomy, shows the arrangement of the verbs at various levels.

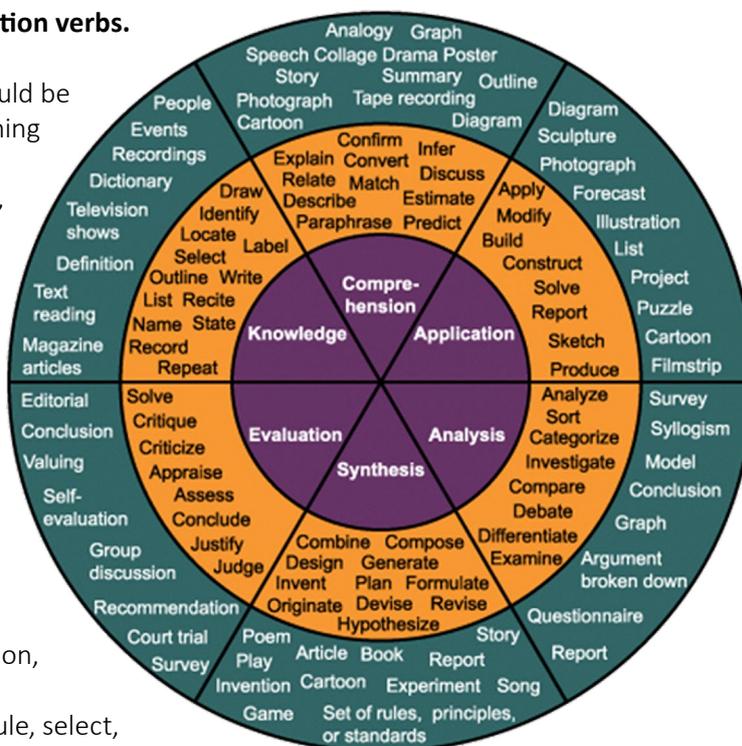


Figure 2. Bloom’s taxonomy verb wheel.

Source: <https://sites.goggle.com/site/bloomstaxonomy2/verb-wheel>

Certain verbs are unclear and call for covert, internal behaviour, which cannot be observed or measured. These types of verbs should be avoided. Examples of such verbs are appreciate, become aware of, become familiar with, know, learn and understand.

**Examples of learning outcomes that are difficult to measure are as follows:**

- 'Know' the benefits of physical exercise on personal health.
- 'Understand' how to carry out a titration.

**To determine the credit for a learning outcome**, one has to consider the estimated learning time taken by the 'average' student to achieve the learning outcome. The learning time would be a combination of teaching contact time (lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory practical classes, workshops, fieldwork, etc.), time spent on preparing and carrying out formative and summative assessments (written coursework, oral presentations, exams, etc.) and time spent on private study, research and group discussions. After the total volume of time has been determined, the credit value could be obtained by dividing the amount of time by 10. The division by 10 is because one credit represents 10 notional hours of learning on the PQF. If it is felt that it requires more than the stipulated hours to achieve the learning outcome, then the learning outcome must be further unpacked.

The level of the learning outcome is a number between 1 and 10, inclusive. **To determine the level of a learning outcome**, the learning outcome must be compared with the level descriptors. The level of a learning outcome is the PQF level at which the descriptors most closely match the learning outcome.

The determination of the level and credit of learning outcomes requires an understanding of the subject matter. Thus, it can only be done by people who have knowledge of the subject.

## 3.8 Co-requisites and Pre-requisites

A **pre-requisite** is a unit that a learner must study before he/she can enrol in the next associated unit. The pre-requisite unit gives the knowledge that is needed to take the next unit.

A **co-requisite** is a unit that a learner must study before or at the same time as another associated unit. The co-requisite unit gives the complementary knowledge that is needed to succeed in both units.

**Mature age entry** is when a prospective learner does not have a formal educational qualification, but may still be eligible for entry into a programme on account of the work experience that he/she has accumulated. This learner is most likely to be of an age higher than the other learners for the same qualification. Institutions of learning recognise that valuable intellectual skills and development can be gained through a wide range of experiences and informal study.

Requirements for entry – including co-requisites, pre-requisites and restrictions into each component of the qualification – must be clearly documented.

## 3.9 Component Completion Requirements

For each component, the requirements for successful completion – including those on units of competencies/subjects, assessment results and the level of performance – should be clearly documented.

## 3.10 Qualification Design, Approval and Review

The development and approval of qualifications refers to how qualifications are created and approved.

Establishing the need for the qualification is the first step in its development. Dialogue with industry and other stakeholders is essential in order to gather labour market data for identifying skill shortages and work requirements. This will provide clear and robust evidence that a qualification will be useful, relevant and of value to learners, employers, industry, communities and to the region as a whole. The identified workforce and skill needs will be reflected in the purpose and outcome statements of the qualification. Qualifications are built on what a person should be able to 'do, be and know' and be useful throughout their career in an industry, sector or community.

Some of the common steps in the development of a qualification are formation of industry groups, analysis of job task, or development of a Graduate profile and development of competency standards. The combination of a group of competency standards would constitute a qualification.

The involvement and engagement of a wide range of relevant stakeholders in the development and approval of qualifications is necessary to ensure qualifications are based on identified and valid workforce/community needs, and will be fit for purpose. Stakeholders must be appropriate, credible, representative, and recognised by their industry or community as people who are able to speak with authority on behalf of the sector that they represent. A comprehensive stakeholder profile ensures that all relevant stakeholders have the opportunity to participate.

**Examples of organisations that may have an interest or 'stake' in the outcome of a qualification and who therefore need to be involved are as follows:**

- Government agencies.
- Non-government organisations.
- Education and training authorities.
- Industry experts.
- Training providers.
- Quality assurance agencies.
- Industry organisations.
- Professional associations.
- Community representatives.

It is common practice to base qualifications on industry or occupational competency standards and to involve industry in the development of these standards. There are also vast differences in the range of qualifications that are developed, with some countries preferring to have a range of highly specialised qualifications and other countries preferring a small number of general and broad qualifications. Another approach is to leave decisions about qualification development to the industry sectors.

The various stakeholders in the development of a qualification would have different interests and roles.

**Examples of these are shown in the table below.**

Stakeholder group	Interest/Roles
Industry organisations	Ensure that the qualification is relevant and current; one that will equip Graduates with skills to be able to perform the duties of the position effectively

Stakeholder group	Interest/Roles
<b>Licensing authorities</b>	Ensure the qualification is sufficiently packaged to meet the licensing requirements of the trade
<b>Students and community representatives</b>	Ensure the needs of communities and individuals are met by the qualification
<b>Quality assurance agencies</b>	Ensure the qualification development and approval processes are quality assured
<b>Government agencies and education and training authorities</b>	Ensure the qualification contributes to meeting the skill needs of the country
<b>Professional associations</b>	Ensures that relevant occupational standards are incorporated into the training and are met by the graduates
<b>Training providers</b>	Ensure that the units of competencies and the qualification are pitched at an appropriate level

The evidence of stakeholder participation in the development and approval of qualifications could be in the form of attendance lists, minutes of meetings, letters of support, etc.

Qualifications exist to meet the needs of learners, industry, society and the economy. Thus, they need to be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain useful, relevant and fit for purpose. Qualifications in sectors where there is rapid change, such as information technology, may need to be reviewed more frequently than those sectors where the pace of change is slower. In view of the importance of the review process, it is necessary to ensure that it is well structured and organised. The review should be timely and consider the views of learners, relevant industries, professions, academic communities and other stakeholders.

For the accreditation of the qualification, the developer must also submit information about the strategy on the periodic review of the qualification and its components. Information about the timeframe of the review – as well as the process and people who would most likely be involved – must be provided.

### 3.11 Resource Requirements for Qualification Delivery

After the accreditation of a qualification, providers could seek approval for its delivery. An important criterion that providers would need to meet before approval is granted is that *there is capacity to support sustained delivery of the qualification in all modes and sites*. This implies a provider has an adequate number of appropriately qualified and trained staff members, the required physical resources, and the required support services for the efficient delivery of the qualification.

To assist in ascertaining if a prospective deliverer meets the criteria on resource requirements, the information on qualifications and experience of trainers/teachers, teacher to learner ratio, physical resources, and support/guidance systems that will assist learners in the qualification need to be clearly spelt out. This information will facilitate comparison between what a proposed deliverer has against what is required, and will assist in making decisions on granting approvals.

### 3.12 Qualification Completion Requirements

The qualification completion requirements are the requirements for programme structure and progression through the programme.

The core courses, electives (if any) and the requirements for satisfactory completion must be clearly stated.

**An example of completion requirements is as follows:**

In order to qualify for the award of Certificate in Computing, learners must gain a grade of 'pass' or better in all core competencies and at least two of the electives. Learners must also have completed at least 10 weeks of practical attachment.

There should also be a mention of any progression opportunities from the proposed qualification to other qualifications.

**An example of this is as follows:**

Upon completion of the Certificate in Computing, Graduates would qualify for admission into the Diploma in Computing, Diploma in Information Systems, Diploma in Information Technology and Bachelor of Information Technology.

### 3.13 Supporting Documents

The following documents must accompany the application for accreditation:

**a. Legal registration Certificate**

The Legal registration Certificate is a document from an authority or organisation certifying that the entity has been appropriately established and complies with the legislation and by-laws.

**Examples of legal registration Certificates are as follows:**

- An Act of Parliament.
- Certificate of Registration (In case of Fiji, under the Companies Act, Charitable Trust Act, etc.).
- Constitution (in case of religious and non-profit organisations).
- Memorandum of Understanding and Agreements.

**b. Qualification document**

The qualification document (QD) is a document that describes the entire qualification. The QD could also be used to promote the qualification. The QD must be compiled using the template shown in Appendix 2.

**c. Component descriptors**

Detailed information about each component should be provided.

**d. Documentation on stakeholder involvement and support**

This refers to documents that show that stakeholders were involved in the development of the qualification. The documents could be in the form of attendance lists, minutes of meetings, letters of support, etc.

**e. Documentation on qualification approval**

This refers to a document that clearly spells out that the qualification was formally endorsed by the group that was responsible for its development. This could be in the form of meeting minutes or discussion notes with signatures of all the people in the development team.

## SECTION 4:

# Application for Accreditation of a Provider Qualification

An application for the accreditation of a regional qualification must be made on the form entitled “Application for Accreditation of a Regional Qualification Form”. The form is shown in the manual on ‘Policies and Procedures on QA Processes’. The application must be accompanied with the prescribed accreditation application fees and the following documents:

- Legal registration Certificate.
- Qualification document.
- Component descriptors.
- Documentation on stakeholder involvement and support.
- Documentation on qualification approval.



# SECTION 5:

## Criteria and Outcomes for Qualification Accreditation

### **Criterion 1:**

The institution is recognised and its contact details are clearly stated.

### **Criterion 2:**

The title of the qualification is appropriate and indicates the nature, level and volume of learning.

### **Criterion 3:**

The purpose and outcome statements appropriately reflect the need for the qualification along with the nature of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are to be acquired by learners, and are aligned with a predetermined and appropriate PQF level.

### **Criterion 4:**

The learning outcomes and their levels and credits are appropriate and they collectively constitute a coherent and logical qualification.

### **Criterion 5:**

The institution has a quality strategy on the development, approval and review of the qualification and its components, resulting in the acceptability of the proposed qualification by the relevant stakeholders.

### **Criterion 6:**

The delivery and learning methods for all modes of delivery for the stated learning outcomes are adequate and appropriate.

### **Criterion 7:**

The institution has the means for ensuring that the assessment procedures and methodology are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate for the stated learning outcomes.

### **Criterion 8:**

The institution has the required physical, financial and human resources to support the sustained delivery of the qualification in all delivery modes.

### **Criterion 9:**

The requirements for successful completion are appropriate, reasonable and clearly documented.

- The nine criteria for the accreditation of a provider qualification are broken down into 67 outcomes.
- The outcomes under a criterion further explain the criterion and provide a basis for determining if it has been met by the responses in the accreditation application and the supporting attachments. The outcome of an application for accreditation would be determined against these sets of outcomes.
- Upon the development of a qualification, and prior to the submission of the application for its accreditation, the developer is advised to carry out a self-assessment of the application against the outcomes. The self-assessment report must be attached to the accreditation application form.

## SECTION 6:

# Outcomes of Provider Qualification Accreditation Application

There are two possible outcomes of an application for accreditation of a regional qualification. The outcomes, their descriptions and conditions are shown below.

No.	Outcome	Description	Condition(s)
1	Accredited	A qualification that is deemed fit for its purpose as implied by the outcomes for qualification accreditation. An accredited qualification is a qualification that has met all the outcomes for qualification accreditation.	The accreditation will be for a period of five years, after which it has to be renewed. The qualification will subsequently be registered on the PRQS.
2	Non-accredited	A qualification that is deemed unfit for its purpose as implied by the outcomes for qualification accreditation. A non-accredited regional qualification is one that has not met one or more critical outcomes for accreditation, or does not have support to be a regional qualification, or does not adequately address the specified needs of the region.	



# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: The PQF Level Descriptors

The Application domain can be deconstructed to type and problem-solving, while the Autonomy domain can be deconstructed to level of support and Degree of judgement.

Level	Knowledge and skills	Application	Autonomy
10	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ involve critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge at the forefront of a discipline or area</li> <li>➤ involve high level critical analyses, reflection of independent and original thinking</li> <li>➤ involve the creation and interpretation of new knowledge or practice, through original advanced research that satisfies formal academic review</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ are highly complex and specialised, involving new or evolving aspects</li> <li>➤ involve the formulation and testing of theories and processes to resolve significant highly complex, abstract and emergent issues</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ minimal guidance and a high level of autonomy, initiative, adaptability and self-direction</li> <li>➤ a requirement for authoritative judgement, and high planning, management and innovation</li> </ul>
9	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ involve mastery and integrated understanding of a complex body of knowledge – some of which is at the forefront in one or more disciplines or areas</li> <li>➤ involve high level critical analyses, evaluation, reflection and independent thinking</li> <li>➤ involve research as the basis for extending or redefining knowledge or practices in one or more disciplines or areas</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ are complex and specialised, and generally involving some new or evolving aspects</li> <li>➤ involve the formulation and testing of theories and processes to resolve highly complex, abstract and emergent issues</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ minimal guidance and substantial autonomy, initiative, adaptability and self-direction</li> <li>➤ a requirement for expert judgement, and considerable planning and management</li> </ul>
8	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ are highly advanced, theoretical and technical, within one or more disciplines or areas</li> <li>➤ involve critical, analytical and independent thinking</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ are complex with some specialisation</li> <li>➤ involve the formulation of processes to resolve highly complex and abstract issues</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ minimal guidance and demonstrated self-direction or autonomy</li> <li>➤ a requirement for significant judgement, planning, coordination and organisation</li> </ul>

Level	Knowledge and skills	Application	Autonomy
7	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are highly theoretical and/or technical with significant underpinning knowledge, within one or more disciplines or areas</li> <li>involve critical and analytical thinking</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are subject to complex change</li> <li>involve the formulation of or substantial adaptation of processes to resolve complex and abstract issues</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>broad guidance and demonstrated self-direction</li> <li>a requirement for significant judgement, planning and coordination</li> </ul>
6	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are highly theoretical and/or abstract, or technical within a broad field or in-depth within one area</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are subject to change with some complexity</li> <li>involve the formulation of or adaptation to processes to resolve complex and sometimes abstract issues</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>broad guidance or direction</li> <li>a requirement for well-developed judgement and planning</li> </ul>
5	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are mainly technical and theoretical, within a broad field or in-depth within one area</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are both known and changing</li> <li>involve unfamiliar issues that are addressed using a range of processes that require some adaptation</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>general guidance or direction</li> <li>a requirement for both judgement and planning</li> </ul>
4	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are broadly factual, with technical and theoretical aspects</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are stable but sometimes unpredictable</li> <li>involve familiar and unfamiliar issues that are addressed by interpreting or varying processes</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>routine direction or guidance</li> <li>a requirement for judgement and some planning</li> </ul>
3	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are factual, procedural, technical, with some theoretical aspects</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are stable and predictable</li> <li>involve familiar issues that are addressed by selecting from known solutions</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>routine supervision and direction or guidance</li> <li>a requirement for some judgement and discretion</li> </ul>
2	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are factual or manual, or operational</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are structured and stable</li> <li>involve straightforward issues that are addressed by set, known solutions</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>close support and direction</li> <li>minimal guidance, judgement or discretion required</li> </ul>
1	<p>Demonstrated knowledge and skills that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are basic, foundational and explicit</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in contexts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are highly structured, defined and repetitive</li> <li>involve straightforward and everyday issues that are addressed by simple and rehearsed procedures</li> </ul>	<p>In conditions where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>immediate support and clear direction</li> <li>almost no required judgment or discretion</li> </ul>

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 2: Qualification Document Template

### Qualification Document Template

1. **Name of Organisation:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Name of Qualification:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Level:** \_\_\_\_\_ 4. **Credits:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Duration:**

*This qualification could be completed in one year on a full-time basis.*

6. **Credit Profile:**

Level	Credits
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

*NB: If there are strands/electives, please modify the credit profile table accordingly.*

7. **Purpose:**

8. **Outcome statement:**

9. **Explanatory Notes:**

10. **Requirements for Award of Qualification**

10.1 Summary of Requirements:

10.2 Detailed Requirements:

**Compulsory Set:**

The following modules are required from this set.

Provider Module Title	Unit Standard/ Learning Outcomes	PQF Level	Credits

*A minimum of x credits are required from one of the following elective sets of 1, 2, 3 or 4.*

**Elective Set 1:**

Provider Module Title	Unit Standard/ Learning Outcomes	PQF Level	Credits

**Elective Set 2:**

Provider Module Title	Unit Standard/ Learning Outcomes	PQF Level	Credits

**11. Credit Transfer Arrangements****Example**

Candidates for this qualification may claim exemptions from standards and/or credits from those specified below.

**12. Special Arrangements****Example**

Since this qualification is accredited and registered on the PRQS, EQAP's seal would appear on the Certificates of learners who successfully meet the requirements for the award of the qualification.

**13. Transition Arrangements****Example****Version 1**

This is a new qualification and this is the first version.

However, some candidates may have completed part of their programme on the old apprenticeship model. These candidates will not be disadvantaged by the process and will be given the option to continue with that traditional programme or transfer to the FQF qualification. Candidates who choose to transfer to the new qualification will be given an opportunity to gain credits from the new qualification, based on their achievement up to the date of transfer. These credit arrangements will go through an approved assessor and will be on a case-by-case basis.

All new candidates will be enrolled in programmes or courses leading to the award of this replacement qualification.

The last date of enrolment for the old qualification will be 31 December 20XX and the last date for the award of the old qualification will be 31 December 20XX.

**Previous versions of the qualification**

Version \_\_\_\_\_ (version number) was issued on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

#### 14. Qualification Developer

This qualification was developed by:

**Provider name:** .....

**Postal Address:** .....

**Telephone Number:**.....

**Email:** .....

**Website:** .....

#### 15. Planned Review

ISACs, whose standards are included in the qualification, and/or providers whose components are included in this qualification may initiate the review if the qualification.

Any person or organisation may also contribute to the review of this qualification by sending feedback to the training provider at the above address.

Next Review	20XX
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#### 16. Certification

This Certificate will display the logos of EQAP, and the registered provider.

#### 17. Quality Management Systems

Providers intending to deliver the qualification must seek approval from EQAP. For this, they need to complete the form Approval to Deliver a Regional Qualification, and pay the required application fee.

If providers are required to seek approval from their national agencies prior to the delivery of the qualification, then providers must do this on their own accord. For information on requirements and processes on approvals by national agencies, providers must liaise with the agencies directly.

Prior to giving approval to providers to deliver the qualification, EQAP would carry out a pre-delivery audit to ascertain if the provider has the required resources, facilities and environment conducive to learning and teaching.

Providers that are approved to deliver the qualification would need to have the qualification delivery and learner assessment processes validated by a qualified independent validator. The cost of the validation process would be borne by the deliverer.

Certificates of learners who successfully complete the qualification would, in addition to having the logo and seal of the provider, also contain the seal of EQAP.

# References

Fiji Higher Education Commission. 2011. *Criteria, Requirements and Guidelines for Qualification Accreditation Levels 1–6*.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. 2015. *Developing, Approving and Maintaining Qualifications: Selected International Approaches*.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority. 2014. *Guidelines for Approval of New Zealand Qualifications at Levels 1–6 for Listing on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework*.



