

Simplifying the design of New Zealand vocational qualifications

Workshop Summary 29 and 30 June 2021

He Whakamārama - Background

Formal consultation into simplifying New Zealand qualifications and other credentials concluded on 16 June 2021. The consultation resulted in 428 responses through the online survey and emailed submissions. We also heard questions and comments from the 325 participants at our online information sessions and the 49 in-person meetings held during the consultation period.

The consultation feedback provided good support for option 1A (around 35%), good support for option 1B (around 50%), and either no definitive view or alternative ideas from around 15% of respondents. Overall, there was very strong support for qualification simplification, but there was a diversity of views about how this should be achieved.

To understand these views in greater depth NZQA invited 270 stakeholders to hear a more detailed view of the feedback received and to explore variants to the options. 122 stakeholders participated in the two workshops held on 29 and 30

Ngā Pātai - Discussion questions

Participants discussed three questions.

Discussion question 1

The vision for a more collaborative system could be achieved by shifting the WDC / TEO zone of collaboration from a 'national curriculum' to the development of Skill Standards.

That would mean:

Skill Standards would have fuller or more detailed expectations about the 'what' (knowledge, skills, attributes).

WDCs would still lead the development of Skill Standards but would need to get meaningful TEO input into the content of those skill standards.

Programmes would be developed in response to each New Zealand Qualification by providers and WDCs would endorse programmes.

It would not be necessary for WDCs to develop Training Packages if Skill Standards were full and clear. Training Packages could therefore be removed from the legislation.

Discussion question 2

Since we heard there is a need for more consistency in some industries and that a national curriculum idea could work well, but may not work well in all industries, could the use of a national curriculum be optional?

WDCs could decide whether to endorse multiple programmes leading to a New Zealand qualification or whether to use a national curriculum (with no unique programmes). Training Packages would be removed from the legislation.

Discussion question 3

Do you have any other suggestions for a different configuration of qualification components that can achieve the goal of:

- Simplification of the qualification system
- Learner mobility



He rāpopototanga o ngā hua - Key point summary

The following summarises the key themes from the two workshops:

Trust in the system and trust in the qualifications is critical.

Simplification of the current system is required. Employers and learners need to be able to understand it.

Sufficient/pragmatic flexibility is required (using the right tool for the job e.g. skills standards and flexible programmes in the creative sector or national curriculum where needed i.e. where there is regulation).

Use of skills standards and/or national curriculum for consistency, quality, development, endorsement, management, and timely delivery of the new education products across all industries.

- lots of potential in skills standards if they are fuller and more detailed - well written with learning outcomes and assessment standards clear
- some industries need more flexibility e.g. the arts sector and ICT
- development of skills standards and national curriculum would require robust collaboration and co-design with stakeholders
- how will skills standards work in the school environment (vs unit standards)
- training packages not needed if skills standards are full and clear
- national curriculum not needed in all areas, develop where there is a clear benefit.

Genuine collaboration and co-creation across the sector, including industry, TEOs, schools, regulatory bodies, professional bodies, and learners is critical for longer term success and operationalisation of the new vocational education system.

- collaboration is key whether it occurs at skill standard or national curriculum level. It is not just about involving the TEOs but also schools, regulatory bodies, professional bodies
- all voices across the system need to be considered in the reform of vocational education. Achieving this will require effective transparent engagement processes to ensure that all stakeholders are able to provide feedback, and this will help to build trust and confidence in the new educational products
- understanding the end to end process and components of the new system is required to help

understand the decision points, pain blocks and opportunities, so that quality educational products can get to market faster.

WDCs have a key role in the development, approval, and endorsement of the new educational products, and will require significant technical knowledge to ensure the overall integrity of the qualifications system is enhanced.

- not all industries are represented in the 'membership' of WDCs and there will need to be a supporting layer of industry advisory groups to develop new training products
- WDCs will require transparent and robust mechanisms to genuinely engage with TEOs, big and small businesses to ensure the new educational products meet industry and regional needs
- WDC endorsement of products is needed going forward.

Further engagement is required with Māori partners and stakeholders to understand how mātauranga Māori could be more strongly included in vocational qualifications and education products. A one-size fits all regional approach to mātauranga Māori is not useful.

Understanding of learner pathways is key to ensuring that the educational products delivered will produce the desired outcomes for learners and industry. We need to prevent 'cul-de-sacs' in the system.

Ensure learner interests are protected in whatever approach is adopted.

Employers want to be involved in the development of educational products to ensure that they are fit for purpose, and delivered in a timely, cost-effective way, so that graduates are able meet current and future demand for their businesses.

Consideration of funding and resourcing implications for the development and delivery of the new educational products across the system needs to more fully understood and scoped.

There is some hesitation about potential changes in the system before we have started.

