

COOK ISLANDS QUALIFICATIONS

Historical Overview

- The Cook Islands have been independent since 1965 and enjoy a special “free association” relationship with New Zealand
- Cook Islanders are New Zealand citizens by birth and hold NZ Passports
- Cook Islanders have free entry into NZ and hence into Australia
- Cook Islands qualifications are intertwined with those available in New Zealand, namely the NZ National Qualification Framework (NQF)

New Zealand NQF

- An NZQA accredited provider may offer courses and assess students against NZQA standards for which the provider holds accreditation for, i.e. the range depends upon the scope of the provider's accreditation.
- The NQF offers a very wide range of hierarchical qualifications from Certificate level to Post graduate level in almost all areas of learning, including all trades and other vocational areas. Hundreds of registered qualifications may be accessed.

Cook Islands Qualifications

- School based. There are 7 NZQA accredited Colleges which offer students the opportunity to gain a range of NZQA and Cook Islands recognized qualifications.
- NZQA qualifications include NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3. NZ University Entrance, National Certificate in Business Administration and Computing Levels 2 and 3
- Cook Islands recognized qualifications include CI Certificate in Employment Skills (Levels 1 and 2), CI Level 1 Certificates in Agriculture, Business Studies and Tourism, CI Certificate in Tourism Level 2.
- In all of the above students are assessed against standards (unit or achievement) registered on the NQF.
- Of particular interest is the registration of CI Maori standards (although these are more appropriate for second language learners).

Cook Islands Qualifications

- Post-secondary based. Post secondary training is managed by the Department of National Human Resource Development (NHRD) – currently a separate entity from the Ministry of Education.
- Access to NQF qualifications is via NZ registered off-shore providers such as Unitec, Weltec and the Open Polytech.
- NHRD operate a trade training centre which offers NQF qualifications to Level 4 in Carpentry, Electrical Engineering, Automotive Engineering and Plumbing
- Also offered via Open Polytech and Whitireia Poly are the National Certificate in Computing Level 2 and the National Certificates in Business and Administration Levels 2 & 3.

Cook Islands Qualifications

- Non-accredited providers. Currently there are several post-secondary providers that offer courses and certificates that are not linked to the NQF.
- Cook Islands School of Nursing – a two year training programme leading to local registration.
- Cook Islands Teaching Diploma – a three year primary pre-service training programme leading to the CITTC Diploma (recognised only in the Cook Islands). An application to NZQA for accreditation of its courses (not the qualification) is in progress.
- The Cook Islands Maritime Training Centre. This centre offers a range of local and internationally recognized courses and qualifications for persons operating craft. The courses include: Sheltered Waters Boat Safety, Day Sailer, Boatmaster, Sea Safety and Class 6 Master/Engineer.
- Hospitality & Tourism Training Centre (HTTC). This institute provides a wide range of training (non-qualification based) to persons employed in the hospitality and tourism industry. Courses include: Food and Beverage, Food Production, General course and Management courses. Weltec have recently made a proposal to Government to establish this as an off-shore centre to offer courses that lead to the City and Guild qualifications.

Association of Cook Islands Tertiary Institutions (ACITI)

- ACITI will become an NZQA accredited umbrella body to manage the delivery of post-secondary training and the award of NQF qualifications for all non-accredited bodies. Application for accreditation is currently under consideration by NZQA.
- ACITI will enable smaller non-accredited bodies to offer courses and assess students against the NQF. These may include: HTTC, Maritime Training, CI School of Nursing, CI Teachers College and others as the demand arises.

15 year strategic plan

- The Ministry is currently in the process of finalizing a 15 year education sector strategic plan which aims to provide education and training to the whole nation from birth. Under this plan it is likely that the two current providers (MoE and NHRD) will merge
- The plan addresses 17 major policy issues amongst which are: an increased use of ITC to improve and expand delivery to those living in the outer islands; extend our current pre-school education (from 3 ½ years) down to earlier years; provide continuing basic education for adults and establish adult learning centres in all our outer island schools