

Conference Report

ESITO Staff member name:	Tim Stevens
Conference Name:	Qualifications Forum 2010
Purpose and theme:	Current work being undertaken in the field of qualification development
Date of Conference and Venue:	1 December 2010
Summary of first presentation	<p><i>Rob Strathdee, School of Education Policy and Implementation Victoria University</i></p> <p><i>A comparison of National Qualification Frameworks around the world</i></p> <p>Rob undertook a project for the International Labour Office (ILO) comparing different NQF's around the world. In all he undertook 16 case studies.</p> <p>The scope of the project included the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent establishing a NQF is a good strategy for achieving a country's policy goals? • What approaches to NQFs are the most appropriate in different contexts? • What supporting resources might be required? <p>The study was a response to a lack of comparative evidence on the effectiveness of NQF's. It established that there are five established NQF's, and 11 emerging NQF's, and these fall into 3 categories of NQF: Communications (e.g. Scotland), Reforming (e.g. Ireland), or Transformational (e.g. New Zealand).</p> <p>Communications – attempt to make an existing system more transparent and easier to understand.</p> <p>Reforming – improves an existing system in specific ways.</p> <p>Transformational – has a future system as a starting point and defines qualifications and structure of ideal provision.</p> <p>There were three central messages from the final ILO report;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no 'right' model of NQF • The context is critical • NQF's cannot achieve the ambitious policy objectives claimed for them (the more ambitious the claims, the less success they have). <p>Their findings were that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is considerable evidence of difficulty in implementing NQF's • Most success is gained where the development of frameworks is seen as

Change control	
Document created:	7/03/2011
Last varied:	7/03/2011
Last reviewed:	7/03/2011

	<p>complementary to improving institutional capability rather than as a substitute or as a way of re-shaping institutions.</p>
<p>Summary of second presentation</p>	<p><i>Liz Bowen-Clewley – Competency International Ltd</i> <i>A Comparison of Quality Management Approaches for the Training and Vocational Sector in seven countries</i></p> <p>The aim of the project was to provide an easy reference for countries wishing to introduce and/or review quality management approaches in the TVET sector.</p> <p>To be effective, quality management systems (QMS) should be able to meet the needs of all of the following different groups at national, regional and provider levels;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, who want to know that their qualifications are of good quality, comparable with others from other providers and credible in the marketplace • Funders (including national governments), who want to ensure they are getting value for the money invested in terms of skilled and employable graduates • Employers, who want assurance that a qualification means a graduate has the requisite knowledge, skills and attributes to be useful in the workplace • Education providers, who want to be able to benchmark their programmes against other comparable providers and receive funding for their provision; and • Government policy makers who invest in a TVET system to ensure their country workforce is skilled and can meet the labour requirements for industry and of the international labour market. <p>Their recommendations were;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All institutions providing programmes of learning or qualifications in the TVET sector are covered by national quality requirements 2. When establishing quality management requirements for TVET, every effort should be made to ensure interagency congruence with these requirements 3. Monitoring and /or audit of quality management requirements to ensure consistency of requirements and judgements 4. That at a national level a QMS should be underpinned by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant government policy and enabling legislation which supports a quality assurance agenda • Establishment of a national qualification or skills framework which aligns all TVET qualifications in a country. This framework should be linked with or at least not inconsistent with secondary, tertiary and professional qualifications • Establishment of regulatory agencies/quality assurance bodies that have the mandate to license, audit or accredit trainers, assessors or training organisations in accordance with quality assurance standards • Audit processes that ensure mandated (rather than voluntary) internal self evaluation with the standards and criteria external audit • Processes for dealing with non compliance • One central QAB that can delegate authority for quality assurance to other regional or industry based QABs on the basis of the national requirements that are themselves subject to audit and review by the central body.

Change control	
Document created:	7/03/2011
Last varied:	7/03/2011
Last reviewed:	7/03/2011

	<p>5. In implementing any QMS all stakeholders are given the training required to meet the system's requirements and that some method of accreditation is implemented to ensure that all professionals in the system have had their competence formally measured</p> <p>6. All institutions and students have access to appeal procedures.</p> <p>They recommended that any QMS should incorporate the following good practice principles;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide for equity of access to all training, regardless of ethnicity, gender or geographical considerations • be embedded in the culture of the organisations operating under its requirements • be rigorous, comprehensive, systematic and transparent • be focused on identifying strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement • be based on a wide range of evidence • involve stakeholders • lead to targeted action and improvement • be recorded and reported • be a continuous systematic process as opposed to an event.
<p>Summary of third presentation</p>	<p><i>Dr Andrew Cleland – IPENZ Collaborative Qualifications Development: National Engineering Education Plan (NEEP)Project</i></p> <p>Project background;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded by the Tertiary Education Commission • A collaborative research and development venture between all major stakeholders in engineering education • The aim was to develop a coherent national plan to ensure that the right number of the right types of engineering graduate is produced to meet New Zealand's needs. <p>They researched the balance of level 7 and 8 graduates and discovered;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In large countries 50:50 balance of engineering technologist (Level 7) and professional engineer (Level 8) • In NZ SMEs demand generalists so more Level 8 graduates appropriate • Level 8 graduates do much work that is below professional level. <p>Based on their findings two diplomas have been developed;</p> <p>NZ Diploma in Engineering (NZDE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic diploma • 240 credits • Covers underpinning knowledge of engineering technician

Change control	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement based assessment. <p>And;</p> <p>NZ Diploma in Engineering Practice (NZDEP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied diploma • 120 credits • Covers further engineering knowledge and its application to the work place • Competence based assessment. <p>The NEEP Project has established;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear pathways from senior secondary to tertiary study in engineering and related technologies • Consistent messages about qualifications • International benchmarking • Clear progression for careers in trades, as technicians and professionals • Greater collaboration between tertiary providers and industry • National and regional industry needs considered.
<p>Summary of fourth presentation</p>	<p><i>Martin Eadie – Management Consultant</i> <i>Approaches to Assessment of Prior Learning</i></p> <p>The assessment of prior learning is called many different things around the world, there are literally dozens of different terms.</p> <p>In some countries a distinction is made about the nature of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recognition granted – e.g. if the recognition is for the purpose of granting a qualification, ‘accreditation’ or ‘current competency’ may be used. For the purpose of granting entry to a course or gap training, ‘recognition’ may be used • The previous learning experience that is being evaluated – e.g. making a distinction between ‘experiential learning’ and ‘non-formal learning’. <p>Assessment of Prior Learning (APL);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers recognition given for learning, not for experience alone • The skills and/or knowledge are present at the point of assessment • Leads to recognition of the same value as credit gained through formal learning. <p>Internationally there are some common barriers to APL;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and perception • Complex processes • Inadequate support • Confusing language. <p>And there are also some common key tensions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting systems too light - little confidence by candidates and stakeholders in the outcome • Too heavy there is frustration, low levels of engagement and high costs • Striking the balance - achieving materials and a system valued for its robustness and

Change control	
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	<p>ease of use is the key challenge for APL.</p> <p>International experience has also highlighted some suggested approaches to APL;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clear, concise and jargon-free language • Provide good support and approaches to assist candidates and assessors to gather and judge evidence • Use experienced professional APL assessors • Continuously strive to achieve cost-efficient APL. <p>In the TEC Strategic Review of Pathways and Staircasing 2006, Recommendation 26 stated;</p> <p>‘That a programme of work be undertaken on the future direction of recognition of prior learning, and that additional funding be provided for this work.’</p> <p>It included 9 RPL recommendations – NONE of these have been completed.</p> <p>Of all ITO’s, only 8 have a detailed RPL/RCC process on their website, and 19 have no information at all.</p> <p>Australia, between 2006 and 2009, invested around NZ\$10 million on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of RPL • Professional development of assessors and auditors • Development of a virtual website and referral centre • Creation of 10 specific RPL models primarily in skills shortage areas. <p>Is there a need in New Zealand for APL?</p> <p>In Martin’s view, gaining qualifications (with and without APL) can sometimes produce enormous economic and social returns, but can sometimes be a waste of time and money. However, we continue to need a qualification system that allows recognition to be given to the wide range of existing and emerging paradigms of learning.</p> <p>The implementation of the NZQF provides a significant opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate and identify the qualification system tools that have worked well to support the “recognition of competency already achieved” • Identify new tools and process to further enhance the “recognition of competency already achieved”.
<p>Summary of any additional presentations (if required)</p>	
<p>Website links for keynote and plenary address slides or downloads</p>	<p>http://www.itf.org.nz/new-zealand-qualifications-forum-2010.html</p>

Change control	
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