

## **Session 2-1**

### **Quality Assurance of Mātauranga Māori Qualifications and Education Providers in New Zealand**

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#### **Abstract**

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) has developed an evaluative quality assurance (EQA) framework that provides the flexibility to recognise education success and excellence in varied contexts.

Māori are the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Mātauranga Māori is an extensive and dynamic body of knowledge belonging to Māori people that provides a means of exploring and understanding Māori world views that have been explicitly shaped from Māori values, traditions and experiences over time.

NZQA recognises the importance of Mātauranga Māori as a significant contributor to success in education for many Māori people. With this in mind, New Zealand needs an approach to quality assurance that provides a constructive and credible way of coming to a common understanding of excellence in education based on Mātauranga Māori philosophy, knowledge and thinking.

In 2009, NZQA embarked on a major project to develop the necessary tools, processes and philosophical approach to quality assure those tertiary education organisations basing their delivery on Mātauranga Māori philosophy and practice, and also to quality assure a set of qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework that are founded on Mātauranga Māori.

Key stakeholders, notably the Māori tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and qualification developers themselves, were directly involved in the development process. Fundamental to this project was an understanding that NZQA does not “own” or define Mātauranga Māori – Māori as a people do.

Mātauranga Māori educators and NZQA worked in partnership to develop and implement a quality assurance approach driven from an authentic Māori world view.

Mātauranga Māori evaluative quality assurance (MM EQA) is the result.

This paper will describe the background to, and development of, MM EQA.

## **Introduction**

### *New Zealand Qualifications Authority*

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is the government agency responsible for the quality assurance of all non-university tertiary education organisations (TEOs) in New Zealand – including Wānanga (specialist Māori tertiary education providers), Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics, Private Training Establishments, Government Training Establishments and Industry Training Organisations.

### *Quality assurance context*

Before the introduction of evaluative quality assurance by NZQA in 2009, TEOs were required to maintain a quality management system and to undergo a ‘quality audit’. The quality ‘standards’ used as part of NZQA’s audit process focused on various inputs, processes and systems believed to contribute to quality education. However, the input-focused audit standards were static in nature and inevitably contributed to TEOs taking a short term view of their activities, at least in a quality assurance context. The audit process also tended to place a mono-cultural worldview on what quality education looked like.

Māori are a numerical minority in Aotearoa New Zealand. A “one-size-fits-all” approach to quality assuring qualifications and programmes that are specifically based on Māori values and aspirations typically does not work well, as those values and aspirations can too easily be misunderstood or simply not recognised when subject to ‘mainstream’ scrutiny.

TEOs that base their qualifications and delivery of programmes on Mātauranga Māori knowledge, philosophy and thinking have long argued for an approach to quality assurance that can recognise the quality and value of what they do on its own merits.

But how can a Government agency that typically has had a “one-size-fits-all” approach shift to a quality assurance model that can credibly incorporate what is unique and important to Māori? And how can that be done in a way that genuinely supports excellent provision and valued outcomes for the learners and communities involved in this type of provision?

### **NZQA evaluative quality assurance framework**

As part of a set of reforms of tertiary education begun in 2006/2007, NZQA developed its evaluative quality assurance (EQA) framework. Evaluative quality assurance shifted the focus from system inputs to key processes contributing to ‘valued outcomes’.

The evaluative quality assurance framework seeks to support the development and enhancement of a culture of quality and high performance in TEOs. The framework is underpinned by core principles<sup>1</sup> of:

- High trust, high accountability
- Quality as a dynamic concept
- A practical focus on outcomes
- Strategic and needs-based
- Flexibility

### ***Self-assessment and external evaluation and review***

On-going self-assessment by the tertiary education organisation and periodic external evaluation and review by NZQA are at the ‘heart’ of the evaluative approach to quality assurance.

As a vital component of EQA, NZQA introduced self-assessment as a policy requirement for all recognised (non-university) TEOs in 2009. Self-assessment by TEOs is intended to be a systematic process of data-driven self-reflection, directed towards coherent and clearly articulated goals to inform decision-making and operational practices.<sup>2</sup>

External evaluation and review (EER) by NZQA seeks to independently validate what TEOs know for themselves about the quality of their provision, and the steps they take to improve it, through their self-assessment.

NZQA has published various resources, and provides advice through its sector relationship team, to assist the development of self-assessment in the sector generally. Integral to this approach is a common focus between the sector and NZQA on high level key evaluation questions that concentrate on the quality and value of a range of outcomes and key processes.

NZQA uses EER to form evaluative conclusions about the educational performance and self-assessment capability of TEOs. NZQA independently forms these conclusions within the context of educational, societal and government needs. The conclusions are drawn from the six (open-ended) key evaluation questions focusing on learner achievement, the range and value of outcomes achieved, and the key processes contributing to those outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> The framework is also underpinned by the ‘key features of effective self-assessment’: needs assessment; processes and practices; learner achievement; outcomes; using what is learned; and, actual improvement. <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/self-assessment/>

<sup>2</sup> Information and guidance about self-assessment can be found at:  
<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/self-assessment/>

The outcomes addressed include a direct focus on learner achievement, course and qualification completion, retention in study and progression to further study, as well as a practical interest in several longer-term and arguably even more important outcomes related to employment; the development of personal and learning skills; the creation and dissemination of new knowledge; and contributions to the New Zealand's community or national interests.

Synthesis methodology provides the basis to form robust, defensible conclusions on the educational performance and self-assessment capability of TEOs. Tools include the tertiary evaluation indicators, which serve as merit criteria, and performance criteria rubrics. Together these are used to help ensure evaluative conclusions are well-informed from by current research and experience in tertiary education and reached on a consistent and comparable basis. Evaluative methodology holds the key to enabling this to be achieved.

EER reports specify NZQA's level of confidence in the TEO - *Highly Confident*, *Confident*, *Not Yet Confident* and *Not Confident* in two key areas – educational performance and capability in self-assessment. The reports are published in full on NZQA's website.<sup>3</sup>

### ***A flexible approach to quality assurance***

Evaluative quality assurance places NZQA in a role to influence and support the growth of quality in New Zealand's higher education sector. This environment requires TEOs to take responsibility for quality, and focus on measuring or recognising what matters for improving educational performance, and not simply focus on things a TEO is obliged to measure or do. This model for maintaining and improving quality is sustainable, and decreases the government's reliance on punitive and governmentally/externally applied measures as a means for improving quality.

Done well, evaluative approaches encourage TEOs to take greater responsibility, be bolder in their innovations and be more responsive to learners and stakeholders – because through the use of really effective self-assessment, TEOs know what is really working and what is not.

Evaluative quality assurance acknowledges that there is no one “right” way. Every tertiary education provider will have an understanding of quality that will vary according to the varying purposes and goals of each provider. When an external quality agency, such as NZQA, takes this view, a set of pre-defined input standards for

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<sup>3</sup> Information and guidance about external evaluation and review can be found at:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>

Examples of external evaluation and review reports can be found at:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/eer-reports/>

quality will not be sufficient. External quality review must be flexible and responsive enough to judge what ‘good’ education is in a range of different contexts – where the context at least in part defines what the evidence of good quality might look like.

## **The pathway to Mātauranga Māori evaluative quality assurance**

### ***Mātauranga Māori***

Māori are the indigenous peoples of New Zealand. Mātauranga Māori is an extensive and dynamic body of knowledge specific to Māori people and seen by many as integral to Māori conceptions of education success.

Precious to Maori, Mātauranga Māori is sometimes described as a means of exploring and understanding Māori world views that have been explicitly shaped from Māori values, traditions and experiences over time. NZQA recognises the importance of Mātauranga Māori as a significant contributor to success in education for Māori people.

For many involved, Mātauranga Māori is a ‘lived reality’, a deep and spiritual approach to life and of fundamental importance to both every-day and longer-term endeavours.

With this in mind, New Zealand needs an approach to quality assurance that provides a constructive and credible way of coming to a common understanding of excellence in education based on Mātauranga Māori philosophy, knowledge and thinking.

### ***NZQA and Māori education priorities – Te Rautaki Māori***

From its inception in 1990, NZQA has endeavoured to make the interests of Māori learners and Māori knowledge an explicit focus. New Zealand became one of the first countries in the world to recognise indigenous knowledge on its national qualifications framework (called ‘Field Māori’). For more than two decades, recognised Māori experts have worked with NZQA to provide advice on the development of national standards and qualifications that cater specifically to Māori knowledge, pedagogy, and skills.

Parallel to the development of the evaluative quality assurance framework in the mid-2000s, NZQA also launched its first Māori education strategy – *Te Rautaki Māori* – with the aim of strengthening the quality assurance and qualifications systems that supported Māori education achievement.

Māori education aspirations and NZQA desired responses are clearly set out in the *Te Rautaki Māori*, launched in 2007. The strategic direction outlined was for ‘full Māori participation in a knowledge-based society and economy’ and was supported by the following key goals to:

- support Māori to succeed as Māori
- enable Māori to participate successfully as citizens of the world
- grow knowledgeable Māori communities
- grow Māori capability
- foster Māori social well-being
- facilitate economic transformations of Māori communities.

Following the launch of *Te Rautaki Māori*, NZQA embarked on a major programme focused on growing Māori knowledge through the development of criteria for programmes, qualifications and tertiary education providers based on Mātauranga Māori.

### ***A window of opportunity***

Because of the significant philosophical shift to an evaluative model of quality assurance for all TEOs from 2009 onwards, NZQA saw an opportunity to develop an approach that could be used in Mātauranga Māori contexts without compromise to the integrity of Māori values and aspirations.

Attempts to design generic responses to the education needs of Māori that work in both the Māori and ‘mainstream’ worlds are challenging to get right. The response can lead to compromises between different worldviews and values. A generic approach can also constrain the possibilities of what can be achieved through more innovative, responsive and needs-based approaches to designing and delivering education programmes and qualifications.

NZQA recognised the importance of Mātauranga Māori as providing a foundation for success for many Māori in education. With this in mind, what was needed was a quality assurance approach that provided a constructive and credible way of coming to a common understanding - between Māori and NZQA - of what excellence in education capability and performance might look like in a Mātauranga Māori context.

### ***Mātauranga Māori – a specialised quality assurance focus***

Later in 2009, NZQA embarked on a major project to develop appropriate tools, processes and the necessary philosophical approach to quality assure Mātauranga Māori qualifications and the performance of TEOs that base their delivery on Mātauranga Māori. Key stakeholders, notably the Māori TEOs and qualification developers themselves, were directly involved in the development process as part of a ‘Mātauranga Māori evaluative quality assurance’ working group.

Fundamental to this project was an understanding that NZQA does not “own” or define Mātauranga Māori – Māori as a people do. This is an explicit

acknowledgement that this body of knowledge remains within the care and guardianship of Māori people and tribes.

MM EQA is a partnership between Mātauranga Māori and NZQA's evaluative framework, and represents a quality assurance approach driven from an authentic Māori world view. This partnership was realised through the application of two equally important principles - the working group strived to develop MMEQA without compromise to the integrity of Mātauranga Māori itself and without compromise to the integrity of the evaluative quality assurance process and outcomes.

Mātauranga Māori evaluative quality assurance (MM EQA) is the result.

### ***Developing the Mātauranga Māori evaluative quality assurance framework***

The events held and publications released while developing an MM EQA process are all significant reference points for NZQA in undertaking its journey with Mātauranga Māori.

Beginning in 2009, meetings were held across the country. Conversations helped to re-frame and build understanding of Mātauranga Māori in relation to educational achievement, excellence and scholarship. These meetings reflected a sense of anticipation for how such a framework could change and advance Māori knowledge and education, and the value this would add to programmes, teaching and research.

MMEQA was NZQA's response to these conversations, and in March 2010, NZQA released its proposed model for public comment. Strong support for the model's principles-based approach gave the NZQA Board the confidence to approve further development of the model.

Later in 2010, a national Mātauranga Māori Symposium was held, which provided further momentum to support work on Mātauranga Māori and quality assurance.

The system was trialled in 2011 with five TEOs, and a working group established to work alongside NZQA to complete the final developments. The working group comprised representatives from wānanga<sup>4</sup>, institutes of technology/polytechnics, privately-owned education providers, Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust<sup>5</sup>, and NZQA's

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<sup>4</sup> Wānanga are recognised by the government as Māori education providers regarded as peers of New Zealand universities and institutes of technology/polytechnics. A wānanga is characterised by teaching and research that maintains, advances, and disseminates knowledge and develops intellectual independence, and assists the application of knowledge regarding Māori traditions and customs.

<sup>5</sup> Te Kohanga Reo operates a total Māori language immersion programme for children from birth to age six. The mission of Te Kohanga Reo is the protection of the Māori language and philosophies through targeting the participation of families and their communities in learning and teaching.

three Māori Advisory Groups – Ngā Kaitūhono, Whakaruruhau, and the Māori Economic Development Forum.

In April 2012, the NZQA Board approved the tools and processes for supporting the implementation of the MM EQA framework.

In May 2012, the MM EQA initiative was launched.

### ***Maintaining integrity***

NZQA conceives of evaluation as the systematic process for determining the quality, importance and value of things. MMEQA acknowledges that a distinctive approach is required to credibly quality assure Mātauranga Māori qualifications, programmes, and providers. Central throughout the development of MM EQA has been a commitment to ensure that the integrity of both Mātauranga Māori and evaluative quality assurance is maintained. The intention is that neither side of the partnership seeks to dominate or compromise the other.

Systematic and rigorous in its approach, MM EQA is based on the principle that what is of value to Māori should be central, with Mātauranga Māori outcomes, processes, philosophies, and practices should be recognised on their merits.

In the context of Mātauranga Māori, the quality assurance function, fundamentally, needs to be able to understand and value what is genuinely important, in much the same way as the developers and providers of the qualifications and programmes do. Those things that quality education nurtures – knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes – must be able to be recognised and their value acknowledged in a way that is authentic to the Mātauranga Māori endeavour.

### ***MMEQA key components***

MMEQA is entirely specific to Mātauranga Māori. It has its own principles, tools, philosophy, practices, and expectations as well as Māori evaluators and evaluative analysts specifically trained to implement it.

MMEQA encompasses:

- listing qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework
- approving programmes and accrediting TEOs to deliver programmes
- self-assessment by the tertiary education organisation
- external evaluation and review by NZQA

Because NZQA does not define what Mātauranga Māori is, tertiary education organisations and qualification developers can choose to “opt-in”, meaning that it is a matter of choice to participate in the MMEQA or the ‘regular’ EQA approach.

The MMEQA process is based on dialogue and is highly participatory. The working relationships are characterised by mutual trust and respect.

The MMEQA tools have been developed in both Māori and English languages to reflect different, but compatible, emphases. The dual nature of the tools reflects the partnership approach and a commitment to there being no compromises.<sup>6</sup>

Eight Māori principles provide the starting point for the MMEQA approach and these sit alongside the core evaluative quality assurance principles.

**Table 1: Descriptions for the eight kaupapa Māori principles**

Whanaungatanga	Connecting, fostering and maintaining relationships for the benefit of all.
Manaakitanga	The presence and expression of behaviour and practices that influence and lead.
Pūkengatanga	The presence and expression of knowledge, which has been cared for, promoted and appropriately handed on.
Kaitiakitanga	The presence and expression of the preservation, guardianship, and enhancement of what you have for the future benefit of all.
Rangatiratanga	The expression of a worldview that is distinctly and uniquely Māori.
Tūrangawaewae	The presence and expression of one intimately connected to the land, place, people, and culture.
Te Reo Māori	The presence and expression of a language that is alive, vibrant, and flourishing.
Ngā Tikanga	Processes, practices, and procedures are consistent with a Māori worldview.
Whanaungatanga	Connecting, fostering and maintaining relationships for the benefit of all.

The tools include Mātauranga Māori-specific evaluation questions (ngā pātai tuakana – teina), merit criteria (ngā whaingā) and performance rubrics (ngā paearu).

A ‘Mātauranga Māori quality assurance mark’ is awarded to those qualifications and programmes achieving excellent or outstanding results in Mātauranga Māori.



<sup>6</sup> The relevant documents, tools, information and explanation can be found at:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/maori/mm-eqa/>

The Mātauranga Māori quality assurance mark is represented by the Toroa (Albatross) with wings folded in eternity. For Māori, the albatross represents magnificence, authority, and expression. The name Toroa also makes reference to *aho ariki* (prestigious lineage) and its symbolic place in the sources of Māori knowledge – cosmological, philosophical and methodological understandings.

For Māori, the qualities of magnificence, authority and expression are conferred to a person who wears albatross feathers, and this privilege is usually given to a person of rank. The mark symbolises lifelong learning and partaking of the food of knowledge. This concept is a visual representation of the whakataukī adopted by NZQA.

## **Conclusion**

Quality assuring Mātauranga Māori qualifications, programmes, and organisations provides unique and deep challenges.

NZQA is committed, through the most recent Māori education strategy – Te Rautaki Māori - to the on-going development and full implementation of Mātauranga Māori evaluative quality assurance in the future, building on what has already been established.

MM EQA provides a platform for validly recognising and valuing expressions of Mātauranga Māori, and the ways in which Māori value those expressions.

It is ground-breaking in that it is a specific approach to quality assurance that directly addresses what is important to an indigenous people (Māori) in terms of their unique knowledge and approach to providing higher education.

The role for NZQA in carrying out its quality assurance function is to understand and acknowledge the aspirational nature of these endeavours and balance this with the need to rigorously recognise the integrity, validity, and quality of Mātauranga Māori programmes, qualifications and education providers.

*Te manu ka kai i te miro, nōna te ngahere.*

*Te manu ka kai i te mātauranga, nōna te ao.*

The bird that partakes of the berry, his is the forest.

The bird that partakes of knowledge, his is the world.

Figure 1: Te Hono o te Kahurangi

