

Fact sheet: Quality Assurance of Offshore Education

Offshore Programme Delivery Rules

The *New Zealand Qualifications Framework Offshore Programme Delivery Rules* came into effect in September 2012.

The new *Offshore Delivery Rules* extend existing quality assurance measures – they will further increase the economic value of international education and provide our tertiary sector with certainty when planning for offshore delivery.

The new *Rules* are aligned with UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for the Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education - they will enhance New Zealand's international reputation and underpin the marketing of New Zealand tertiary education offshore.

The *Rules* apply to all universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics, private training establishments, wānanga and government training establishments.

This Fact Sheet provides a brief overview of the *Rules*. NZQA has also published Guidelines to assist all providers apart from universities.

What is Offshore Delivery?

Offshore delivery is programme delivery by a New Zealand provider in a country other than New Zealand. The *Rules* also apply to 'twinning' arrangements, where an overseas provider delivers part of an NZQF qualification offshore in partnership with a New Zealand provider, and distance or e-learning delivery of an NZQF qualification marketed to offshore students by a New Zealand provider or its offshore partner.

What programmes are covered?

The *Rules* apply to programmes, or parts of programmes, that lead to qualifications listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, including completely new programmes and programmes for which providers are already accredited. Only universities and Category 1 and Category 2 institutions can be accredited for offshore delivery.

What is not included?

The *Rules* do *not* apply to articulation arrangements where a New Zealand provider cross-credits all or part of an overseas qualification towards a New Zealand qualification; offshore delivery of programmes that contribute to an overseas provider's qualification; and any other education services provided offshore, such as consultancy and research.

When must providers comply with the new Rules?

By 31 December 2013 all institutions that were carrying out offshore delivery when the *Rules* came into force (September 2012) must apply for approval under the new *Rules*. Institutions that have previously obtained approval for offshore delivery, must reapply for approval by this date. By 30 June 2014 all institutions intending to carry out offshore delivery must obtain approval under the new *Rules*.

The Offshore Delivery Rules in summary

NZ institutions remain responsible for the quality of learning and assessment delivered offshore regardless of who is delivering the programme. Institutions are responsible for the actions and performance of any offshore partner organisation and must proactively monitor the quality of delivery.

NZ institutions must be accredited even if they do not intend to offer the programme within NZ. The same applies if offshore partners deliver the whole programme.

Summary of the special offshore approval criterion

1. **The design of the programme** is suited to delivery in the host country and the needs of offshore students.

Summary of the special offshore accreditation criteria

2. **Any offshore partner organisation** is a reputable legal entity with tertiary education experience and financial stability. They must have appropriate ownership, management, facilities, educational resources and student services.
3. **There is a formal agreement** with any offshore partner specifying how rules and processes will be complied with, including clear channels of authority and accountability and covering compliance with local requirements.
4. **Resources** are of comparable quality, type and availability to those used in New Zealand and appropriate to enable successful outcomes for overseas students.
5. **Assessment** methods, criteria and moderation are consistent with programmes in New Zealand, and appropriately adapted for offshore delivery.
6. **Teaching staff** have suitable qualifications, experience, teaching skills, management and oversight, appropriately adapted to offshore delivery.
7. **Student and academic support services** are effective and there are procedures for student complaints.
8. **Relevant and accurate information** can be accessed by intending and enrolled students can, including information on the language of delivery and assessment.
9. **Fee refund provisions** are clear, and will not undermine the educational reputation of New Zealand. In the event of programme closure appropriate alternative education will be available.
10. **Quality assurance and management systems** are suitable for offshore delivery and quality assurance requirements in the host country are met.

To maintain approval for offshore delivery

Institutions must keep a permanent and accurate record of student enrolment and achievement. There will be self assessment, external evaluation and regular reviews of the programme and its delivery offshore.

How does NZQA evaluate applications?

NZQA evaluates applications against both the existing *Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules* and the new *Offshore Delivery Rules*. NZQA considers any potential risks - where there are higher levels of potential risk, NZQA will need more detailed information.